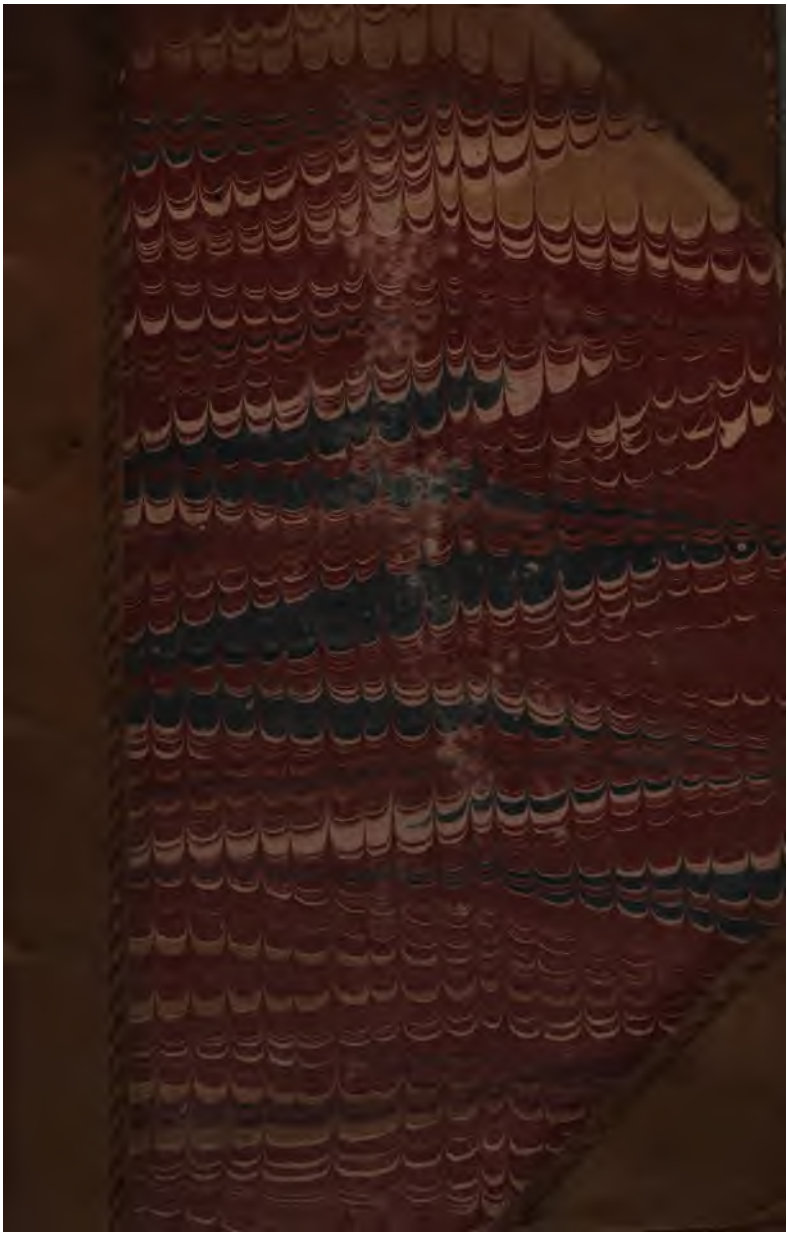

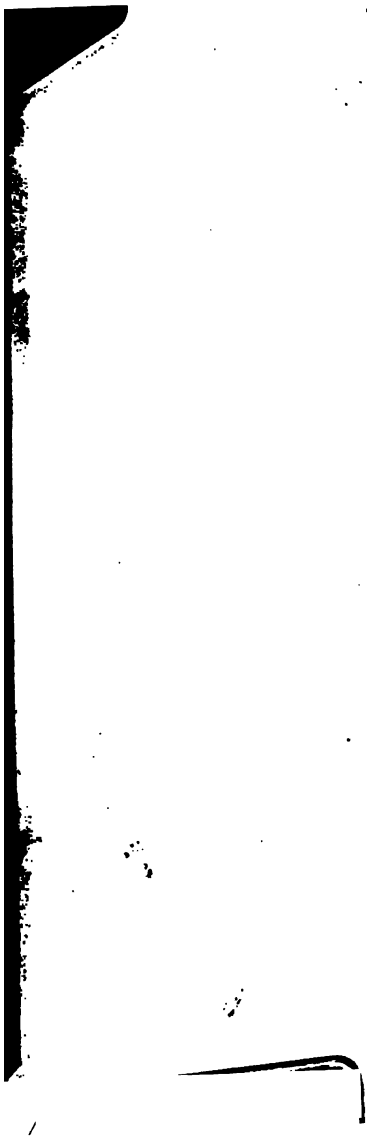

FAVORITE SONG BIRDS;

CONTAINING

A POPULAR DESCRIPTION

OF THE

FEATHERED SONGSTERS OF BRITAIN;

WITH AN ACCOUNT OF THEIR

Habits, Haunts, and Characteristic Traits.

INTERSPERSED WITH

CHOICE PASSAGES FROM THE POETS AND QUOTATIONS FROM EMINENT NATURALISTS.

EDITED BY H. G. ADAMS,

Author of "Flowers: their Moral, Language, and Poetry." "A Story of the Seasons," &c., &c.

With Twelve Colored Illustrations on Stone,

BY EDWARD GILKS.

"Children of song! ye birds that dwell in air,
And stole your notes from angels' lyres, and first
In levee of the morn with eulogy
Ascending, hail the advent of the dawn."—POLLOK.

LONDON:

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TO

MADEMOISELLE JENNY LIND,

THE UNIVERSALLY ACKNOWLEDGED QUEEN OF SONG,

THIS VOLUME

IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED,

AS MUCH OUT OF ADMIRATION FOR THOSE

AMIABLE AND BENEVOLENT QUALITIES

WHICH DISTINGUISH HER,

AS FOR THE SUPEREMINENT VOCAL POWERS

WITH WHICH SHE IS GIFTED.

Dedicatory Sonnet.

"Can any mortal mixture of earth's mould
Breathe such divine, enchanting ravishment?"
MILTON.

'Tis thine to wake the sympathetic chords,
That slumber in each heart not wholly dead;
Thine is a power more eloquent than words;
Thine is a soul that hath on music fed,
Till it hath grown like one that's nourished
By food celestial:—all thy life accords,
And all thine acts in harmony are wed,
And wealth, and love, and praise, are thy rewards:
But more than this—the inward consciousness
Of spending well the means, to thee assigned,
And not alone to please!—to aid, and bless
The poor and suffering of human kind.
Great as thy gifts, thy bounties are; in thee
MUSIC bears sway with mild PHILANTHROPY!

PREFACE.

WE are all lovers of birds—song birds especially! How can we help being so? They are at once the most lovely, and innocent, and joyous of God's creatures. It is good for us to cherish this love,—healthful to our souls, as well as our bodies :—

> "To go abroad rejoicing in the joy
> Of beautiful and well-created things.
> *To thrill with the rich melody of birds,*
> Living their life of sunshine :
> To see, and hear, and breathe the evidence,
> Of God's deep wisdom in the natural world."

Therefore, would we earnestly invite all and sundry to ramble with us through the green mead, and shady woodland, by croft and hedgerow, stream and waterfall, there to watch these Feathered Favorites, amid the *homes* and *haunts* which best they love; there to listen to those sweet familiar strains, which *freedom* renders doubly joyous and inspiriting; and there to learn how God provides abundantly for all his creatures, and gives even to the weakest the means to satisfy its wants and secure its safety. Many a song shall we have to sing, many a choice passage from the poets to recite,

and many an anecdote to relate, of the various individuals of the feathered choir, which come under our notice; and for scientific facts, and the necessary particulars as to their habits and characteristics, we shall repeat only what has been asserted by the best and most recent authorities, and thus endeavor to set before our readers, such a series of pictures of the most esteemed of the BRITISH SONG BIRDS, and such an account of their *habits*, and *distinguishing traits*, that for other than strictly scientific purposes, they may have nothing to desire in the way of information thereupon. We trust that our little volume will be found at once entertaining and useful; a choice companion for a country walk; an agreeable fireside remembrancer of out-of-door pleasures; and, in short, a book for all seasons and occasions. That the subject of it is one that will interest many readers we can scarcely entertain a doubt, and it is here treated in a manner which we believe to be somewhat different from that of any other existing work of the same nature. We have endeavored to render it as attractive as possible, believing, with a writer in "the Quarterly Review," that, "whatever tends to attach man to the works and manifestations of God in the natural world around us, addresses itself to higher faculties than those which merely reside in the understanding;" and, therefore, exerts a beneficial influence on the human heart and mind. We may quote this writer still further, and say—"No

branch of Natural History seems to us so likely to engagé followers as Ornithology; for its materials are every where present, and always attractive in character. Nor is the possession of such tastes a small gain to their possessor."

With all birds, excepting those of the rapacious kinds, are associated images of peace and innocent enjoyment; and we think their principal charm consists in this association. It is true they please the senses by their elegance of form, brilliancy of plumage, and melody of voice; but it may be questioned whether the admiration and delight with which we behold them, and listen to their music, would not be greatly lessened, and in fact, after awhile, sink into indifference, were it not that the mind becomes filled with agreeable reflections; and that pleasing pictures of all things gentle and benign rise up before the imagination,—flowers, and waving trees, and streams that gurgle as they go through leafy dells, and perfume-haunted meads; —spots calm and holy, where

> "The inner spirit keepeth holiday,
> Like vernal ground to sabbath sunshine left:"

"Oh that I had wings like a dove!" said the Psalmist, "for then would I flee away *and be at rest;*" and it *does* seem to us that the proper home of the "feathered choristers," must be in brighter and more peaceful regions, than those which are darkened and deformed by earthly passions and

desires; therefore has their song been likened to the "music of the spheres;" therefore is the "lyrique Lark" said to sing at "heaven's gate;" and therefore do we exclaim with WORDSWORTH, addressing this Bird:—

> "I have walked through wildernesses dreary
> And to day my heart is weary;
> Had I now the wings of a Fairy,
> Up to thee would I fly.
> There is madness about thee, and joy divine
> In that song of thine;
> Lift me, guide me, high and high,
> *To thy banqueting place in the sky.*"

It is this feeling which inclines us to look with indulgence, nay, even with some degree of reverence, upon the superstition of the North American Indian, who worships his "Wakon Bird," and believes it to be a wanderer from the "Happy Hunting Grounds"—a messenger from the Great Spirit to his children upon earth; and it is this, also, which gives us so keen a relish for the beauties of SHELLEY'S exquisite Ode to the Lark; we are inclined to say with him,—

> "Hail to thee, *blythe spirit!*
> *Bird thou never wert.*"

"Lord," said the good IZAAK WALTON, as he listened to the song of the Nightingale, "what music hast thou provided for the saints in heaven, when thou givest bad men such music on earth?"

And the old poet LYDGATE has told us, that, in his time,—

> " It was a very *heavenly* melody,
> Evening and morning to hear the birds sing."

And there are few that have hearkened to the feathered choristers of our—in this respect—highly favored land, but will, we imagine, confess, that such words are but the natural expressions of the good and devotional feelings excited in the human breast, by the melody of those untaught songsters of the grove and the sky—

> " Their forms all symmetry, their motions grace,
> With wings that seem as they'd a soul within them,
> They bear their owners with such sweet enchantment."

And then, again, what pleasant thoughts and memories of early days—of happy careless childhood, are there associated with the music of birds!

Do our readers remember that beautiful lyric of WORDSWORTH's, 'The Reverie of Poor Susan,' in which he describes the emotions of a simple country girl, whose steps were arrested in Cheapside by the song of a caged bird:—

> " 'Tis a note of enchantment; what ails her? she sees
> A mountain ascending, a vision of trees;
> And a single small cottage, a nest like a dove's,
> The one only dwelling on earth that she loves.
> She looks, and *her heart is in heaven*:"

And that affecting incident, related by Mrs. JAMESON, in her "*Winter* Studies and Summer Ram-

bles," of an Irishman in Canada, where there are no larks save those brought from the Mother Country, who on hearing the trill so dear and familiar to his ears stood, as he said, "stock still, *listening with his heart*," and with tearful eyes, thinking of the time when, "a wild slip of a boy he was lying on his back on the hill side above his mother's cabin, and watching the Lark singing and soaring over head." And now to conclude our preliminary talk, and fitly to introduce our feathered favorites, let us quote a sonnet on Song Birds, by our friend G. J. O. ALLMANN.

"Songbirds of Nature, ye, whose bursting throats
People the wildwood with your mellow notes,
I love ye all! and yet can ill-express
The unutterable joy which fills my heart
When pours the language, which your strains impart,
And I may not translate.—Yet not the less
Doth busy Fancy whisper in mine ear
The meaning of each trill! Oh curst be he
Who takes ye from your homes where many a year
Ye carolled with delight that ye were free!
And, with mock tenderness, doth prison ye
In gilded cage, with span of turf to yield.
Oh, mockery! the freshness of the field
Where erst ye revelled in your Liberty."

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THE NIGHTINGALE
Night from her ebon throne stoops down to listen.
To this the sweetest songster of the grove.
And pulses thrill, and eyes with rapture glisten,
As forth she pours her plaintive

FAVORITE SONG BIRDS.

THE NIGHTINGALE.

Motacilla Luscinia, *Linnæus.* **Sylvia Luscinia**, *Temminck.* **Philomela Luscinia**, *Macgillivray.* **Die Nachtigall**, *Bechstein.* **Le Rossignol**, *Buffon*

"Thy voice so touching and sublime,
Is far too pure for this gross earth;
Surely we well may deem the chime,
An instinct which with God has birth!

Thy warblings and thy murmurs sweet,
Into melodious union bring
All sweet sounds that in nature meet,
Or float from heaven on wandering wing."

Lamartine.

PENNANT tells us that the name of this, the most melodious of British Song Birds, is derived from our term *night*, and the Saxon word *galan*, to sing; and although no one will attempt to deny that it is a day as well as a night songster, yet it will, we think, be generally confessed by those who have listened to the "dulcet jargoning" of the "shade-loving Philomela," that more especially during the period of silence and solitude, is the power and richness of its melody felt and acknowledged; then according to MILTON,

"——— is the pleasant time,
The cool, the silent, save where silence yields
To the night warbling bird, that now awake
Tunes sweetest his love-laboured song."

This may, after all be, as some naturalists affirm, but a poetic fancy—the *night*ingale may, and doubtless does

pour out precisely the same notes, and with similar modulations, in the broad sunlight, as in the shadowy stillness, or silvery moonshine, of the period of rest. We care not to deny this, but would strenuously contend that the poets are nevertheless right, when they attribute to the song of this bird, uttered in the night, a sweetness, a richness, and a potency, which it possesses not, or seems not to possess, by day. Then it is that the mind is most free from worldly cares, and the heart is most alive to impressions of a gentle, and a soothing, and a holy character; into these impressions there enters, too, a feeling of solemn awe, at a time when we seem to stand face to face with the great Creator of the universe, and to hold high commune with the mightiest spirits of the past. Then, also, it is that memory asserts her prerogative, and the forms of those lost and loved ones now mouldering in the grave, are once more present with us; we walk amid a host of attendant spirits, and what wonder if we listen, or seem to listen, to music of an unearthly and seraphic character, such as LAMARTINE did truly hear, when he composed the beautiful ode, of which we have placed two stanzas at the head of this chapter, and of which the concluding lines run thus:—

> "And the mysterious voice—that sound
> Which angels listen to with me,
> The sigh of pious night—is found
> In thee, melodious bird, in thee!"

It is this deep and abiding sense of the sublime and the mysterious, which presses upon the human heart in the night season, together with the host of tender recollections which then throng upon the memory, that

has given to most of the poetry written upon the Nightingale, a tinge of sadness and solemnity; with MILTON it is a—

> "Most musical, *most melancholy* bird;"

and although COLERIDGE exclaims, in allusion to this passage,—

> "A melancholy bird? Oh, idle thought!
> In nature there is nothing melancholy;"

yet throughout the whole of the beautiful poem in which these lines occur, there breathes such a spirit of tenderness and benign affection; it is so full of associations, at once humanizing and devotional, that although we are fain to confess with him, that 'tis indeed

> "——————— the *merry* Nightingale,
> That crowds, and hurries, and precipitates,
> With fast, thick warble, his delicious notes,
> As he were fearful that an April night,
> Would be too short for him to utter forth
> His love-chaunt, and disburthen his full soul
> Of all its music."

We nevertheless feel, that both in the poet's lines, and in the song of the bird, to which he alludes so felicitously, there is something far deeper and more touching, than the mere "music of a silver voice," proceeding from a careless and happy breast: we could scarcely address either in the words which SHELLEY applies to the Lark, and say,

> "With thy clear, calm joyance
> Sadness cannot be;
> Shadow of annoyance
> Never came near *thee*."

But rather are we inclined to apply the sentiment uttered by one who felt as *all* feel who have really

tasted of the Pierian spring—which has bitter as well as sweet waters—and say to both poet and bird—

> "Thou hast *loved*, and thou hast *suffered*,
> I know it by thy song."

The majority of poets agree in giving a passionate or a pathetic character to the song of this bird, and by those of antiquity more especially, were its utterances supposed to be those of sorrow and complaint; thus HOMER in the "Odyssey" says,—

> "So sweet the tawny Nightingale,
> When spring's approaching steps prevail,
> Deep in leafy shades *complains*,
> Trilling her thick-warbled strains;"

and HESIOD, following what appears to have been the generally received impression, places her in the pounce of an hawk:—

> "'Twas when the hawk, marauder fell,
> Bore off the dappled Philomel,
> On his crooked claws impaled,
> Piteously the poor bird *wailed*."

By ESCHYLUS and SOPHOCLES, and the tender and plaintive EURIPIDES—himself the very Nightingale of attic tragedians — as with MOSCHUS, and the other bucolic poets, there is this prevailing sentiment expressed; nor must we except even the satirists and comic writers of Greece, as might be shewn by quotations, did our space permit; a line or two from ARISTOPHANES we must give, and it shall be CARY'S admirable rendering,—

> "O come, my mate; break off thy slumbers,
> And round thee fling thy *plaintive* numbers,
> In a most melodious hymn,
> Warbled from thy brown throat dim."

The Latin imitators of these old masters of the

classic lyre might also be cited to show how with them, too, the Nightingale was generally considered a sorrowful and complaining bird; for although VIRGIL speaks of it as "piping beneath the poplar shade" in careless joyance, yet most of them who do make an allusion to it, feign, with OVID, to behold in this feathered songster the transformed Philomela, daughter of Pandion, King of Athens; cruelly misused, and deprived her of her sweet organ of speech—her silver tongue—by Tereus, King of Thrace, her sister's husband, she was changed by the pitying gods—so runs the fable—into

"The sweet and plaintive Sappho of the dell,"

as THOMAS HOOD calls it, very appropriately likening the bird to the most passionate and tender of female poets. It is curious to observe how deep a tinge has been given to the whole stream of poetry, as it flows down from hoar antiquity to the present time, by the old mythological fables. OVID, who collected these fables, and recast them into the beautiful moulds of his own flowing rhythm, and rich poetic imagination, is not an author whose writings can be generally commended for purity of thought, yet without having read his "Metamorphoses," it is impossible to understand and appreciate the beauty and aptness of similitude of many of the finest passages of the standard poetry of this country, and, indeed, of all nations. We say thus much, because we may several times, in the course of these chapters, have occasion to allude to the works of the Latin and other fabulists; and would fain guard ourselves against the imputation of doing so unnecessarily, and out of a false admiration for that which is

often morally wrong, or palpably ridiculous. In treating of the poetical associations of the various Feathered Songsters, we cannot help sometimes alluding to these fables, as they are embodied in the classical poetry of all ages and countries: for instance, what essay upon the Nightingale would be at all complete, without these beautiful lines, which have a place in most collections of early English poetry, and have been attributed to SIR WALTER RALEIGH, although the greater probability is that they are the production of RICHARD BARNFIELD, author of "The Affectionate Shepherd," published in 1594:—

As it fell upon a day
In the merry month of May,
Sitting in a pleasant shade,
By a group of myrtles made;
Beasts did leap, and birds did sing;
Trees did grow, and plants did spring;
Everything did banish moan,
Save the Nightingale alone.
She, poor bird, as all forlorn,
Leaned her breast against a thorn,
And there sung the dolefull'st ditty;
Fie, fie, fie! now would she cry;
Tera, tera! by and by;
That to hear her so complain,
Scarce I could from tears refrain
For her grief so lively shown,
Made me think upon my own.
Ah! (thought I) thou mourn'st in vain,
None take pity on thy pain;
Senseless trees, they cannot hear thee,
Ruthless beasts they will not cheer thee;
King Pandion he is dead;
All thy friends are lapt in lead;
All thy fellow birds do sing,
Careless of thy sorrowing."

And who would be able to understand the allusion here made to King Pandion, or enter fully into the

fine sentiment of sympathy with irremediable sorrow, which forms the key note of the poem, who was unacquainted with the fabulous story of Philomela, the "luckless bird," as HORACE calls it; the "sad," the "complaining," the "love-lorn," the "plaintive," the "grief-stricken"—Philomela of SIDNEY, and DRAYTON, and DRUMMOND, and BROWNE, and FLETCHER, and many other of our early pastoral and dramatic poets, as well as some of later times, who, like POLLOK, make sorrow still the burden of its song:—

> "Minstrel of sorrow! native of the dark!
> Shrub loving Philomel, that wooed the dews,
> At midnight from their starry beds, and charmed,
> Held them around thy song till dawn awoke;
> Sad bird, pour through the gloom thy weeping song,
> Pour all thy dying melody of grief,
> And with the turtle spread the wave of woe."

But it is time that we quitted this misty dream-land, of myths and gloomy fancies, and came forth into the open sunshine of nature, where, apart from the associations of toiling, struggling, sinning, and suffering humanity, it is, indeed, as COLERIDGE expresses it, when he says—

> "In nature there is nothing melancholy;"

and where we shall not want for poets to bear us company. Come, then, let us go forth on this bright May morning, when every coppice and grove, and flowery mead, is vocal with the richly varied notes of the feathered songsters, and ten to one but we shall hear, like a voice of surpassing power and sweetness, rising above the general chorus, and transfusing through the whole, the very spirit and essence of melody, the song of the Nightingale. We will fancy ourselves

in one of the South-eastern counties of this island; some well wooded and watered district of Surrey, Sussex, Essex, Hants, Berks, Herts, Middlesex, Cambridgeshire, or Kent, for to these Counties does our melodious visitant usually confine itself, although it may be sometimes heard as far north as the vicinity of York, and Carlisle, if MACGILLIVRAY is to be believed. It is not, however, by any means generally distributed over the above-named counties, but is found only here and there, in particular localities, such as are best adapted to its wants and habits; a rich alluvial soil where insect food is likely to be plentiful; a gliding stream fringed with pensile willows, and in whose neighbourhood are clumps of leafy trees, close copses, or tangled thickets; a gushing spring, deep hid in shady woodlands, as the old poet has it,—

> "A fountain which no sun e'er sees,
> Girdled in by cypress trees."

An old ancestoral park, dotted here and there with noble oaks and elms, and spreading chesnuts, and interspersed with wooded hollows, and groves, and acres of feathery fern; a verdant lawn, surrounded with a belt of shrubbery, affording a close covert for the shy bird on its first arrival, which takes place generally about the middle of April;—these have irresistible attractions for the Nightingale, and to such spots the same individuals will resort year after year, and make a rich return for the food and shelter which they receive, by pouring forth from sunset to sunrise, and often through the livelong day, their delicious melody.

> I know a coppice, where the cuckoo-flower
> Blooms, like a maiden in her sylvan bower;

Where the wild hyacinth shakes her purple bells
To every gentle zephyr, that of the spring time tells;
There the spotted orchis on her throne of green,
Lifteth up her pyramid, as she were crowned queen
Of the leafy solitude; there the Nightingale
To the fragrant cotton tree, telleth such a tale,
That the droning humble bee pauseth oft to listen,
Seated on the hawthorn blooms, that with dew-drops glisten.
Oh, 'tis a pleasant spot to wile away an hour,
Listing to the sighing breeze, or the tinkling shower,
That upon the fresh green leaves all so gently patters;
Drinking in the melody that the song-bird scatters,
Till the thirsty soul is full, e'en to overflowing,
Of that pure and holy joy, out of commune growing
With sweet Nature, in her green, and solitary haunts,
For which the care-worn dweller in the crowded city pants.
Close upon this coppice, there's a dingle deep
Wherein a drowsy wood-god might securely sleep,
All with brambles overgrown, and long tangled grass,
Seldom human feet, I wis, into its depths do pass;
Some day, when the sun of June near hath run its race,
I will thither bend my steps, to explore the place,
For methinks, beneath its shagged, and bramble-clothed sides,
Like a nun within her cell, the purple fox-glove hides.
Let the sons of Mammon laugh, it is my delight
Forth to fare and gather flowers, and my heart grows light
When I hear the singing bird, and the humming bee,
Pleasures such as these entail no after misery!

This is in Kent, reader, our own fertile and beautiful county; in many parts of which the song of the Nightingale may be heard to perfection. When, in the flowery month of May, we obey the call of the church-going bell, our way lies past a paddock encircled by a border of trees and shrubs, within a high wall on the one side, and a paling on the other; pleasant it is to look over this paling, and through the leafy screen beyond, and see the sunshine sleeping on the green sward, and gilding the grim old castle of Rochester, which towers above the scene like a spectre of the past, till it smiles again, and seems proud of the

rents and fissures which Time has made in its walls, and which Nature has delicately fringed with verdure, and ornamented with flowers; pleasant it is, we say, to look upon this spot of "greenery"—to use a word of Coleridge's coining—on a sabbath morning; and to listen to the Nightingales replying to each other from copse to copse, and tree to tree, while the chiming bells of the church on this side, and the deep boom from the cathedral tower on that, mingle with the choral symphony of these untaught songsters, and call up within us devotional feelings, so that we are indeed ready to exclaim with Izaak Walton—"Lord, what music hast thou provided for the saints in heaven, when thou givest bad men such music on earth?"

But we were speaking of the *haunts* of the Nightingale; of its music, we shall have to say more anon. CLARE, with his usual fidelity to nature, has given us a picture than which nothing can be more perfectly descriptive of just such a home as the shy bird loves, as well as of its domestic habits, if we may so speak; here it is:—

"Up this green woodland path, we'll softly rove,
And list the Nightingale; she dwelleth here.
Hush! let the wood-gate gently close, for fear
Its noise might scare her from her home of love.
Here I have heard her sing for many a year,
At noon and eve, ay, all the livelong day,
As though she lived on song.—In this same spot,
Just where the old-man's-beard all wildly trails
Its tresses o'er the track and stops the way,—
And where that child the fox-glove flowers hath got,
Laughing and creeping through the moss-grown rails,—
Oft have I hunted, like a truant boy,
Creeping through thorny brakes with eager joy,
To find her nest and see her feed her young:
And where those crimpled ferns grow rank among
The hazel boughs, I've nestled down full oft,
To watch her warbling on some spray aloft,

With wings all quivering in her ecstasy,
And feathers ruffling up in transport high,
And bill wide open—to relieve her heart
Of its out-sobbing song!—But with a start,
If I but stirred a branch, she stopt at once,
And, flying off swift as the eye can glance,
In leafy distance hid, to sing again.
Anon, from bosom of that green retreat,
Her song anew in silvery stream would gush,
With *jug-jug-jug* and quavered trilling sweet;
Till, roused to emulate the enchanting strain,
From hawthorn spray piped loud the merry thrush
Her wild bravura through the woodlands wide."

It is in such shady and sequestered spots as these, that the Nightingale builds her nest, and rears her callow brood; not often can that nest be discovered, for it is carefully hidden in the midst of a thick brake, at the roots of trees, or at the very bottom of a closely woven and thorny hedge; and its colour assimilates very closely with the surrounding objects, being generally composed outwardly of withered leaves, frequently oak leaves of the former year, and lined with dry grass; the eggs, from four to six in number, are of an uniform pale olive colour, about nine-and-a-half twelfths of an inch in length, and seven-twelfths in breadth; they will be found figured in HEWITSON'S "British Oology," and also in LEWIN'S "Birds of Britain." We are strongly tempted here to quote a few lines from the old dramatist NICHOLAS ROWE:—

"So when the spring renews the flowery field,
And warns the pregnant Nightingale to build,
She seeks the softest shelter of the wood,
Where she may trust her little tuneful brood;
Where no rude swains her shady cell may know,
Nor serpents climb, nor blasting winds may blow:
Fond of the chosen place, she views it o'er,
Sits there, and wanders through the grove no more;
Warbling she charms it each returning night,
And loves it with a mother's fond delight."

Of the *habits* and *manners* of the Brake Nightingale, in its wild state, but little, as WOOD observes, is known beyond mere conjecture; the German naturalist BECHSTEIN, however, gives some very interesting particulars on this head, and to his admirable work on "Cage Birds," we would refer such of our readers as may desire to know how this songster may be most successfully kept and managed in confinement, although it appears that comparatively very few of the numbers annually caught for this purpose, live out their natural term of existence, or even survive the first year of their cruel imprisonment; therefore, we would say,—make not the attempt; do not, for the sake of a selfish gratification, inflict such wrong and suffering upon any living creature, much less one, that in its state of freedom, ministers so largely to man's intellectual delight. Listen to what WORDSWORTH, following CHAUCER, has said upon this subject:—

"Is there a cherished Bird (I venture now
To snatch a sprig from Chaucer's reverend brow)—
Is there a brilliant Fondling of the cage,
Though sure of plaudits on his costly stage;
Though fed with dainties from the snow-white hand
Of a kind Mistress, fairest of the land,
But gladly would escape; and, if need were,
Scatter the colours from the plumes that bear
The emancipated captive through blithe air
Into strange woods, where he at large may live
On best or worst which they and Nature give?"

We are no advocates for arbitrary interferences on the part of governments with the pleasures, or profitable occupations of the people of any nation, yet we should be inclined to look with some complacency upon such an ordinance as that which, according to "the Cologne Gazette"—was issued by the Prussian

Minister of the Interior, a year or two since, and which had reference more particularly to the Rhenish provinces. The ordinance, which was in accordance with a petition from the inhabitants of those provinces, ran somewhat thus:—

"After the publication of these presents, it is forbidden to catch Nightingales under the penalty of a fine of five thalers, or eight days' imprisonment. Whoever keeps, or wishes to keep in a cage, a nightingale brought from abroad, is bound to give information of it, within eight days, to the police, and to pay, for the benefit of the poor, five thalers yearly. Whoever shall neglect to make this declaration annually, and pay the said tax, shall be liable to pay a fine of ten thalers, or imprisonment for fifteen days."

With such a law in force, we should not have a Whitechapel bird-catcher depopulating a whole locality of Nightingales in a few hours, as is often the case, to the great deprivation of those who dwell in the neighbourhood; nor would there be so many moping, miserable lives of hopeless captivity, among the members of this sweetest of the *Sylvinæ*, or Warbler family.

"Oh, who would keep a little bird confined,
When cowslip bells are nodding in the wind?"

asks LISLE BOWLES; and this reminds us of a saying current in some country places, that wherever the Nightingale is heard to sing, somewhere near, you may be sure, is the cowslip to be found, scenting the passing breezes with the perfume of its freckled bells. This saying doubtless arose from the circumstance that in most of the localities which the bird chooses to inhabit, the soil is favorable to the growth of the flower. This is somewhat similar to the Eastern legend of the love of the Nightingale for the Rose, about *which so much* beautiful poetry has been written.

We have said that the Nightingale feeds principally upon insects, this it does when they are in either the *larva* or *pupa* state; its favorite diet is said to be ants' eggs, and that was a delicate compliment paid by Ernest of Saxony a short time since to Jenny Lind, "the Swedish Nightingale," in the presentation of a golden cup or goblet, filled with this, the richest dainty that could be offered to her feathered prototype, that sings, according to CHARLES MACKAY, as if

> "From every feather,
> In all its frame it poured the notes."

And the name of this poet reminds us of a legend which he has made the subject of some fine musical lines, and which runs thus—

"In the picturesque neighbourhood of Havering-at-Bower, in Essex, Edward the Confessor was accustomed to spend much of his time; delighting so much in the solitary woods there, that he shut himself up in them for weeks at a time. Old legends say, that he met with but one annoyance in that pleasant seclusion—the continued warbling of the Nightingales, pouring such floods of music upon his ear during his midnight meditations, as to disturb his devotions and to draw his thoughts from God. He therefore prayed, that never more within the bounds of that forest might Nightingales' song be heard. His prayer was granted—and, during his whole life, the sweet birds disappeared from the spot, and left him to his austere devotions. A similar story is told of Thomas à Becket, who, during his sojourn at the Episcopal Palace at Oxford, was in like manner disturbed while meditating in the park, and prayed to heaven with the like result."

An austere pietist indeed must he have been, whose devotions were interrupted by such music of God's providing, as that described in the following lines by *an anonymous poet,*—

"Far and near her throbbing song
Floated, rose, or sunk along,
Low or loud—serene—sedate,
Plaintive—peaceful—passionate—
Threaded all the darkened alleys,
Walled and roofed with scented leaves;
Echoed down the swarded valleys,
Clomb the feathered mountain cleaves;
Till upon the waters falling
In its sad and sweet decay,
Died in silence more enthralling
That delicious roundelay."

A French poet has said of his mistress, that "her name is the note of a Nightingale," and in thus saying, he pays a high compliment to both bird and lady; but what kind of a sign manual would her fair hand make, if she were requested to choose between either of the following strange jumble of letters, by which BECHSTEIN has endeavoured to place before us in written characters, the richly varied notes of this charming songster; here is the synopsis, the dashes mark where each strain begins and ends; never before, we apprehend, did puzzled musician see such a vocal score.—

"Tioû, tioû, tioû, tioû—Spe, tiou, squa—Tiô, tiô, tiô, tiô, tio, tio, tio, tix—Coutio, coutio, coutio, coutio—Squô, squô, squô, squô—Tzu, tzu, tzu, tzu, tzu, tzu, tzu, tzu, tzu, tzi—Corror, tiou, squa, pipiqui—Zozozozozozozozozozozozozo, zirrhading!—Tsissisi, tsissisis-isisisisis—Dzorre, dzorre, dzorre, dzorre, hi—Tzatu, tzatu, tzatu, tzatu, tzatu, tzatu, tzatu, dzi—Dlo, dlo, dlo, dlo, dlo, dlo, dlo. dlo, dlo—Quio, tr rrrrrrrr itz—Lu, lu, lu, lu, ly, ly, ly, ly, liê, liê, liê, liê—Quio didl li lulylie—Hagurr, gurr quipio!—Coui, coui, coui, coui, qui, qui, qui, gai, gui, gui, gui—Goll goll goll goll guia hada-doi—Couigui, horr, ha diadia dill si!—Hezezezezezezezezezezezezezezezezeze couar ho dze hoi—Quia, quia, quia, quia, quia, quia, quia, quia ti—Ki, ki, ki, ïo, ïo, ïo, ioioioio ki—Lu ly li le lai la leu lo, didl ïo quia—Kiguigaigaigaigaigaigai guiagaigaigai couior dzio dzio pi."

Naturalists have noticed a great variation in the song of the Nightingale, in accordance with the advance of the season, and with the different emotions which may be supposed to agitate the breast of the bird, such as love, fear, parental solicitude, and the like; thus PENNANT tells us, that when the young birds first come abroad and are helpless, the old ones make a plaintive, and jarring or snapping noise, as if menacing those who might approach to do them harm; and KNAPP, in his "Journal of a Naturalist," describes the croaking sound which they emit towards the beginning of June, which is occasioned, as he thinks, not by a loss of voice, but a change of object. This theory receives a further confirmation from the German naturalist, who says, that in anger, rivalry, or jealousy, the birds utter hoarse disagreeable sounds, like those of a cat, or a jay.

Here, however, we must bring our chapter to a conclusion, let us do so with a choice piece of morality by the old pastoral poet, WILLIAM BROWNE:—

"Not from nobility doth virtue spring,
But virtue makes fit nobles for a king;
From highest nest are croaking ravens borne,
While sweetest nightingales sit on the thorn."


THE GOLDFINCH.
The dapper finch, in gold and crimson drest,
He hath a pleasant song for every ear,
No feather'd architect more neat a nest,
Builds, nor hath one a voice more soft and clear.

THE GOLDFINCH.

Fringilla Carduelis, *Linnæus* and *Temminck*. Carduelis Elegans, *Macgillivray*. Le Chardonneret, *Buffon*. Der Distelfink, *Bechstein*.

"And of these chanting fowles, the goldfinch not behind,
That hath so many sorts descending from her kind."

IT is thus that DRAYTON, in his "Polyolbion," quaintly speaks of our dapper friend, who wears a fanciful livery of nicely shaded buff and brown, that melts away into white on the under parts, and is edged with glossy black, and ornamented at places with gold and crimson. He is the best known and the most admired of the Finch family—a tolerably numerous one, as the old poet above quoted knew full well—admired, and deservedly so, alike for his beautiful plumage, and his sweet song, and engaging manners, in a state of confinement, to which state no bird becomes so soon reconciled as he does. We are no advocates, as our readers must be already aware, of depriving a wild bird of its liberty, but really Master Goldie does seem to enjoy himself so much in a cage, whether it be plain or gilded, that we less regret seeing him there, than we should almost any other of the feathered creatures. Give him but his bit of sugar to peck, and his reservoir of clear water, out of which he will draw you up as many tiny buckets as

you please; give him but enough and to spar
poppy, hemp, rape, canary, or some other favorite s
with an occasional treat of fresh juicy food, such
chick-weed, lettuce, water-cresses, or endive, and

"Who so merry, so merry as he?"

It is quite a pleasure to look at him, and to listen
that sweet song of his, not a shrill bravura, like
lark's, full of trills and extatic gushes, that pierces i
the recesses of the brain, and cannot be heard
where, save in the open fields and under the blue
nopy of heaven, without a feeling somewhat akin
pain. Not a rich warble like the Nightingale's—
very cantatrice of songsters, whose—

"notes, with many a winding bout
Of linked sweetness long drawn out,"

sink into the soul, and stir up emotions painful fi
their intensity; but a cheerful, pleasant song; to
truth, more of a twitter than anything else; a hom
unsophisticated melody, full of jerks, and chirps,
call-notes, very pleasing and amusing, although it m
be confessed, sadly at variance with all the rules
regulations of music as a science. No, it is q
plain that Goldie has never studied the diatonic sc
knows nothing whatever of the gammut, for he jum
together sharps and flats in a manner that must
fectly disgust even a blind fidler, and drive to dist
tion a skilled musician, if he be at all sensitive, as s
generally are. And then the funny fellow has suc
way of turning his body rapidly from side to side
he utters these sprightly notes of his, and so m
amusing tricks, that one cannot help being plea

with him. We wonder not that he is such a general favorite, and only regret that his agreeable qualities should lead to his so frequent imprisonment, saying with HURDIS,—

> "I love to see the little Goldfinch pluck
> The groundsel's feather'd seed, and twit, and twit;
> And then, in bower of apple-blossoms perch'd,
> Trim his gay suit, and pay us with a song.
> I would not hold him pris'ner for the world."

Before proceeding any farther, we had better just introduce our readers to the various members of the family to which our lovely favorite belongs, and here we shall take MUDIE for our guide in preference to MACGILLIVRAY, to whom, however, as well as to WOOD and other naturalists, we shall occasionally refer. Under the generic name *Fringilla* the first of these authorities includes nine individual species; these are —the Greenfinch (*F. chloris*); the Chaffinch (*F. cœlebs*); the Greater Redpole-Finch (*F. cannabina*); the Lesser Redpole-Finch (*F. linaria*); the Mountain Linnet (*F. montium*); the Goldfinch (*F. carduelis*); the Siskin-Finch (*F. Spinus*); the Mountain-Finch (*F. montifringilla*); and the Hawfinch (*F. coccothraustes*); and than this, a more useful family of birds to the agriculturist does not exist. They feed principally upon the downy seeds of the taller and more troublesome weeds, which, but for them, would overrun the country beyond the preventive power of human art. MUDIE says,—

"That each bird eats a hundred seeds every day, is by no means an extravagant calculation; which, however, gives to each, the prevention of 36,500 weeds every year. The birds cannot be numbered; but when the vast flocks which are seen every where are

considered, one hundred millions must be greatly below the a number. That would give the annual prevention of seeds by fi alone, at the astonishing number of 3,650,000,000,000. Say each weed would upon the average occupy one square inch, many of them occupy a hundred square inches,) and the qu of land which the finches annually prevent from being overr little short of 600,000 acres, or more than one seventieth p the total surface of England and Wales, whether cultivated o cultivated. It is true that many of the finches do not live seeds all the year round; but when they are not destroyin seeds of injurious vegetables, they are probably still better emp in the destruction of insects."

Who after this would characterise,—as some l done—the Finches as mischievous birds? What the they do sometimes commit trifling depredation field, or orchard, or garden? If the too lavishly s tered, or imperfectly covered turnip, or radish, or r or carraway, or other seeds, are eaten by them; o juicy cherry, or acidulous currant, or sweet gr tempt them to quench at once their thirst and t hunger; should we complain of this? Should vilify their characters, and pursue them even t death for it? Nay, rather let us look upon the friends and benefactors, for the mischief which do in this way, is but trifling and insignificant, w compared with the good effected by them. Like r creatures that man in his ignorance is apt to look u as dangerous, or mischievous, they have a work a service to perform in the great plan of creation, most diligently and untiringly do they obey, altho without being aware of it, the will of their G Creator,—

Up in the morning early,
When the skies are grey and pearly,

And dew drops stud the meadow grass,
Wetting the feet of all who pass,
You may see the FINCH so lythe,
  Flitting here, and flitting there,
Carolling his matin blythe
On the caller air.

When the bees are all a-stir,
And each flower, a worshipper
Of the sun, hath oped its leaves,
And twittering swallows beneath the eaves
Rest, of the fervent heat aweary;
And other birds in brake and bower,
Shelter seek till a cooler hour;
You may hear, so soft and clear,
  The FINCH'S note-call, cheery;
And where the motes in the sunshine weave
  Their mazy dance,
You may see his form the azure cleave—
  His bright wings glance.

When day is nearly done,
  And night draws on apace,
And the droning beetles, one by one,
  Buzz in the passer's face;
And freshness stealeth over
The thirsty grass and clover,
And sweetest perfumes load the air,
And there is gladness everywhere,
  For the time of rest and peace;
Still the FINCH'S note is heard,
Still we see the busy bird,
Gathering seed from the noxious weed,
As one that hath a task, indeed,
  And knows not how to cease.

The latter part of the scientific name of the Goldfinch, to which, our attention must be now more especially directed, (*Carduelis*), is derived from the Latin term *carduus*, a thistle, from the fact of its feeding much upon the seeds of that plant; by some naturalists the bird is termed the Thistle-Finch, and several of the poets by whom it is alluded to, make this fondness for the national emblem of Scotland, one of its

main characteristics; as it is in the anonymous l quoted by NEVILLE WOOD:—

"Hid among the op'ning flowers,
Of the sweetest vernal bowers;
Passing there the anxious hours,
In her little mossy dome,
Sits thy mate, whilst thou art singing,
Or across the lawn seen winging,
Or *upon a thistle swinging*,
Gleaning for thy happy home."

Generally speaking, the Goldfinch is one of neatest of builders; his nest is constructed exter of vegetable fibres, mosses, and lichens, and in si tions where wool and hair can be obtained, these also used: the lining is commonly hair, or feather vegetable down, it may be of the thistle and o plants of that order, or, as is sometimes the case, of willow. The proportion and nature of the mate depend, however, greatly upon the locality chosen building; cotton wool, and the light flocculent part the flax, being frequently much used, when in neighbourhood of cotton or flax manufactories. flexible branch of a tree is preferred to one th stiff and unyielding, and thus as MUDIE obse "the nest of the goldfinch is literally a cradle, the young are rocked by the winds in their hatc place, nearly as much as they are to be afterwards the tall and flexible stems on which they are to their food." And this is doubtless a wise ordinatio order that the birds may become early accustome the rocking motion, and acquire confidence thus to and to seize that which is necessary to their existe Being frequently placed in such exposed situati were the nest not very closely and compactly wo

and firmly fixed in its place, it would be very liable to be torn in pieces, and scattered by the winds, or at least detached from the lofty bough on which it rests, to the destruction of its precious contents; but this seldom happens, and the little structure swings as safely in its apparently dangerous position, as the sailor boy upon the mast, when the wild blasts howl and whistle fearfully around him. GRAHAME, in his "Birds of Scotland," has well described in a few lines the nest of this bird, and the situations in which he chooses to build, which, it will be seen, vary considerably at times in their character:—

"With equal art externally disguised,
But of internal structure passing far
The feathered concaves of the other tribes,
The GOLDFINCH weaves, with willow down inlaid,
And cannach tufts, his wonderful abode.
Sometimes, suspended at the limber end
Of plane-tree spray, among the broad-leaved shoots,
The tiny hammock swings to every gale;
Sometimes in closest thickets 'tis conceal'd;
Sometimes in hedge luxuriant, where the brier,
The bramble, and the crooked plum-tree branch,
Warp through the thorn, surmounted by the flowers
Of climbing vetch, and honeysuckle wild,
All undefaced by Art's deforming hand.
But mark the pretty bird himself! how light
And quick his every motion, every note!
How beautiful his plumes! his red-tinged head;
His breast of brown: and see him stretch his wing;
A fairy fan of golden spokes it seems.
Oft on the thistle's tuft he, nibbling, sits,
Light as the down; then, 'mid a flight of downs,
He wings his way, piping his shrillest call."

WHITE, of Selborne, makes, we believe, but one allusion to the Goldfinch, and he speaks of it as a bird that sings somewhat late into the year; writing to his friend Daines Barrington, he says,

"I heard many birds of several species, sing last year after Midsummer; enough to prove that the summer solstice is not the period that puts a stop to the music of the woods. The yellow hammer, no doubt, persists with more steadiness than any other; but the wood-lark, the wren, the redbreast, the swallow, the whitethroat, the *goldfinch*, the common linnet, are all undoubted instances of the truth of what I advanced."

KNAPP, in his "Journal of a Naturalist," confirms this testimony, for writing under the date of Oct. 9th, he says: —

"A brilliant morning! warm, without oppression; exhilirating, without chilling. Imagination cannot surely conceive, or caprice wish for an atmospheric temperature more delightful than what this day affords; having mingled with it just that portion of vital air which brisks up animality, without consuming the sustenance of life; satisfying the body with health, and filling the heart with gratitude. Fine threads of gossamer float lazily along the air, marking by this peculiar feature the autumn of our year. On our commons, and about our thistly hedge-rows, flocks of goldfinches (*fringilla carduelis*), the united produce of the summer months, are sporting and glistening in the sunny beam, scattering all over the turf the down of the thistle, as they pick out the seed for their food. But this beautiful native has only a few short weeks in which it will have liberty to enjoy society and life. Our bird-catchers will soon entrap it; and of those that escape their toils, few will survive to the spring, should our winter prove a severe one."

Then, after remarking upon the kind of food for which these birds usually manifest a predilection, in a wild state, and their gradual disappearance, as the severe season advances, until only a few pairs remain of all the flocks of autumn; he continues: —

"Most of our little songsters, when captured as old birds, become in confinement sullen and dispirited; want of exercise, and of particular kinds of food, and their changes, alter the quality of the fluids: they become fattened, and indisposed to action by repletion;

fits and ailments ensue, and they mope and die. But I have known our goldfinch, immediately after its capture, commence feeding on its canary or hempseed—food it could never have tasted before, nibble his sugar in the wires like an enjoyment it had been accustomed to, frisk round its cage, and dress its plumage, without manifesting the least apparent regret for the loss of companions or of liberty. Harmless to the labors or the prospects of us lords of the creation, as so many of our small birds are, we have none less chargeable with the commission of injury than the goldfinch; yet its blameless innocent life does not exempt it from harm. Its beauty, its melody, and its early reconciliation to confinement, rendering it a desirable companion, it is captured to cheer us with its manners and its voice, in airs and regions very different from its native thistly downs, and apple-blossom bowers."

Alas! alas! that with regard to birds, as well as human beings, these attractive qualities should so often prove to them a snare, and a cause of destruction; that a fair form, a sweet voice, and agreeable manners, should tempt the spoiler to spread the net, and allure the unwary victim of his insiduous arts; enticing her to leave her native wilds, to dwell within a gilded cage, where she finds, all too soon, how greatly to be preferred is a life of humble innocence, to one of splendid guilt. Beautiful bird! fair maiden! sweet songsters, both! many dangers encompass you; temptations lurk around; you have need to be wary and circumspect—

Bird and Maiden, oh, beware
Of the limed twig, and the net,
Flattering tongues may speak you fair,
While the hidden snare is set;
Eager eyes may watch your charms,
Lit with a deceitful smile;
Those who soothe your soft alarms,
May your ruin plot the while.

Bird and Maiden, oh, beware!
Of the call, and of the lure,

Go not near the fatal snare,
Be ye free, and be ye pure!
Sing not unto stranger ears,
Songs but meant to cheer your home,
Let 'each footfall wake your fears,
When abroad you chance to roam.

Bird and Maiden, oh, beware
Of soft words, and flatteries,
'Neath the flower that looks most fair,
There's a sharp thorn hidden lies:
Many a Bird, and many a maid,
Trusting confidence hath rued,
Blighted, ruined, and betrayed,
Left alone to pine and brood.

But we are getting sentimental, and this will never do, for the age of sentiment, they say, is gone out, and that of hard-headed, practical utilitarianism come in. If this *is* the case, there will be small chance, we opine, of our obtaining "fit audience, though *few*," for our gossip about SONG BIRDS; but we do not quite believe it, and so shall gossip on, as if there were not a single railroad or electric telegraph in existence, and denounce all and sundry, who dare, except for purposes strictly scientific, mind you, to rob a poor bird of its liberty, or its fledglings, or of that nest which it has prepared with so much care and labor. As to the truant schoolboy, who does this for the mere pleasure of the thing, we would thunder into his ears the words which JAGO makes his bereaved goldfinch utter,—

"O, plunderer vile! O, more than adder fell,
More murderous than the cat, with prudish face;
Fiercer than kites, in whom the furies dwell,
And thievish as the cuckoo's pilfering race.

May juicy plums for thee forbear to grow,
For thee no flower unveil its changing dies;
May birch trees thrive to work thee sharper woe;
And list'ning starlings mock thy frantic cries."

iny anecdotes are related of the intelligence and
ty of the Goldfinch, which can be taught to per-
a variety of tricks, such as letting off a small
)n, feigning itself dead, drawing up buckets of
', &c.; but such exhibitions appear to us far from
ing; much better to leave the bird to its natural
s and instincts, and be satisfied with the grace-
notions and actions which it involuntarily per-
ı. It is to be feared, too, that considerable
ty is sometimes exercised in the training of the
for these exhibitions; the author of a little work
long Birds, published by the Religious Tract
ty, relates, that being present at one of them,
ıserved that the exhibitor, "frequently struck with
inger nail the beak of the poor bird, before it
ı its performance, thereby inflicting upon it (a
of nerves lying underneath the horn) the most
agony." We are induced to quote the obser-
ns with which he concludes his recital, because
ould, on all occasions, enforce the moral so finely
ıt by WORDSWORTH, when he tells us—

> "Never to blend our pleasure or our pride
> With sorrow of the meanest thing that lives."

, then, continues the narrator of this piece of
ty,—

ır blood then boiled with abhorrence and indignation, and at
oment boils as fiercely as ever at the recollection. Let us
ıe subject, with this remark, that they who by torture force
s to execute tricks, for which they were never designed, merit
ıntempt and detestation. Can a man call himself a Christian,
r paltry gain, torture a harmless being, which God in his
ı has called into existence? The necessary destruction of
s for food, for *self-preservation*, and for other lawful pur-

poses, provided we kill quickly and mercifully, is no sin; but wanton torture is a foul crime in the sight of a pure and just God who records even the fall of a sparrow."

We have heard of instances in which the organs of sight of these, and other song birds, have been destroyed by means of red-hot iron wires thrust into the sockets, in order that they might sing the better, but we should hope, for the sake of human nature, and the sweet charities of life, that such instances are very rare. A poet, who writes under the initials, C. B. S., in "Friendship's Offering," thus touchingly addresses a Goldfinch which has suffered this cruel deprivation,—

"'Tis a fond foolish sympathy I feel
With thee, poor sightless sufferer! whose strain
Bewails the cruelty of burning steel,
And life's long darkness torturing more than pain.
I droop like thee; my hopeless spirit pines
Through darkened months, perhaps the germ of years,
E'en more than when these cold and cruel lines
Stunned thought and feeling, till relieved by tears.

Like thee, I feel the light I loved withdrawn,
The gloom oppressing with perpetual weight;
To thee sad memory brings the dewy lawn—
To me the social hours I shared so late;
Captivity and darkness prompt thy song—
As dark an exile bids me idly rhyme:
To each the hours uncounted steal along;
Why should the hopeless watch the flight of time?"

With many pleasant memories, and tender household associations, is the bird of which we are now writing linked; indeed, how could it be otherwise, with one which so frequently occupies a place amid the *lares* and *penates* of that beloved spot called "home?" The author of "*Il Pastore Incantato*," and other true poems, has written some very sweet lines, entitled "The Lament of the Goldfinch to its Mistress," that

mistress being dead, and the bereaved bird being supposed to sing a monody at her grave on the night of her interment. A translator of BECHSTEIN relates an instance of excessive attachment of one of these birds for its mistress; he says, that it "never suffered her to go out without making every effort in its power to quit the cage and follow her, and welcomed her return with every mark of extreme delight," and that, "if she presented her finger, he caressed it a long time, uttering a low joyous murmur," and to prove how exclusive was this attachment, if another person's finger were substituted for her own he would peck it sharply. But not only in a state of confinement, but also in one of liberty, is the Goldfinch a bird of tender associations. As we listen once again, after a lapse of years, to its well known notes, we cannot choose but think of the old familiar scenes, and the faces we loved to look upon, and which we shall perhaps never again visit or behold, and like the German poet, DIETMAR, we are inclined thus to express our sorrow and regret,—

"There sat upon the linden-tree
A bird, and sang its strain;
So sweet it sang, that, as I heard,
My heart went back again:
It went to one remember'd spot,
It saw the rose-trees grow,
And thought again the thoughts of love
There cherish'd long ago.

A thousand years to me it seems
Since by thy face I sate,
Yet thus t' have been a stranger long
Was not my *choice* but *fate:*
Since then I have not seen the flowers,
Nor heard the bird's sweet song;
My joys have all too briefly past,
My griefs been all too long."

Some of our readers may perhaps ask why, in our enumeration of the members of the Finch family, we have said nothing about that well known and much admired song bird, the Bullfinch? To this we reply, that in the first place, naturalists do not recognize this bird as a Finch at all; it is placed in a different genus, and called a Gross-beak; and in the second, that we intend to present a faithful portrait of it by and by, when the opportunity will be afforded us of descanting on its merits and demerits. Of the subject of our present remarks, BECHSTEIN gives many very interesting particulars, as also do MUDIE and NEVILLE WOOD: we trust that we have said enough to indicate with sufficient clearness, the nature of its *haunts* and *habits*. It must be borne in mind, that we do not pretend to give anything like a precise or scientific account of the Feathered Songsters, but merely a slight sketch of their general characteristics; interwoven with such poetical and other associations, as the subject may bring most prominently before us; in short, ours is "a Gossip about Song Birds," intended certainly to convey information, and this we hope that it will do, but intended also to amuse the mind, and awaken in the heart feelings of a healthful, and at the same time, of an agreeable nature. We say thus much, that our readers may perfectly understand what they are to expect if they continue in our company; we shall be very rambling and discursive, singing our songs, and saying our say, and quoting a bit here and a bit there—snatches of poetry and prose—just as the humour takes us, and setting aside all sorts of rules, except, we trust, those of good feeling, and good

breeding, and sound morality. And now let us jog on to the end of this chapter, which we think must be near at hand.

In the old play of "the Beggar of Bethnal Green," is an allusion to a trick, said to be still practised by some bird-catchers, although we scarcely believe it possible for the thing to be done so cleverly as to escape immediate detection, viz., painting a Sparrow so as to resemble a Goldfinch, and selling it for that favorite bird. One of the characters in this play is made to say,—

> "He trusts to make his fortune by the priest,
> Of some rich dame the favor sweet to win,
> And thereunto he follows the queen's court;
> But stopping on his way, at Rumford, here,
> Sets eyes upon the linnet I would lime,
> And tarries at our house. But lest he spoil
> My sport, I've pointed out the bush to him
> Where sits a goldfinch—*but a painted one*—
> Our Kate that's vowed to wed a gentleman,
> Our chambermaid, to seek her fortune, come
> Like him to Rumford, and alighted here."

In Scotland, this bird is commonly called the Goldspink, or Goldie; BURNS several times alludes to it under the former name, as thus,—

> "The sober laverock warbling wild
> Shall to the skies aspire,
> The Goldspink, music's gayest child,
> Shall sweetly join the choir."

COWPER'S lines on a Goldfinch starved to death in its cage, must be familiar to most of our readers, and many, no doubt, have seen the eggs of this pretty and sprightly bird, which are, says MACGILLIVRAY, nine-twelfths of an inch in length, and six and a half-twelfths in breadth; their color is something between

a light blue and a grey, with small brown or purple spots; five or six is the number on which the bird usually sets; it is a tender and careful parent, and often rears three broods in a year. Before the crimson appears on the heads of the young birds, they are called *Greypates;* which name, when they have attained their full growth and plumage, is changed into *Goldwings*, that, and not *Goldfinch*, being the appellation applied to this bird by many naturalists.

The following lines given in "Time's Telescope," for 1829, without any author's name attached, will fitly conclude this chapter,—

"Goldfinch, pride of woodland glade,
In thy jet and gold array'd;
Gentle bird, that lov'st to feed
On the thistle's downy seed;
Freely frolic, lightly sing,
In the sunbeam spread thy wing!
Spread thy plumage, trim and gay,
Glittering in the noontide ray!
As upon the thorn-tree's stem
Perch'd, thou sipp'st the dewy gem.
Fickle bird, for ever roving,
Endless changes ever loving;
Now in orchards gaily sporting,
Now to flowery fields resorting;
Chasing now the thistle's down,
By the gentle zephyrs blown;
Lightly on thou win'st thy way,
Always happy, always gay."

THE BLACKBIRD.

The bird with jetty plume and golden bill,
That pours from noon till eve his mellow song,
Singing to echo in the woodlands still,
And by the wood side to the passing throng.

THE BLACKBIRD.

Turdus Merula, *Linnæus*, *Temminck*, and *Macgillivray*. Le Merle, *Buffon*. Die Schwarzdrossel, *Bechstein*.

Methinks, methinks, a happy life is thine,
Bird of the jetty wing and golden bill!
Up in the clear fresh morning's dewy shine
Art thou, and singing at thine own sweet will:
Thy mellow voice floats over vale and hill,
Rich and mellifluous to the ear as wine
Unto the taste; at noon we hear thee still;
And when grey shadows tell of Sol's decline:
Thou hast thy matin and thy vesper song,
Thou hast thy noontide canticle of praise,
For HIM, who fashioned thee to dwell among
The orchard-grounds, and 'mid the pleasant ways
Where blooming hedge-rows screen the rustic throng:
Thy life's a ceaseless prayer, thy days all sabbath days.

H. G. Adams.

NO person can have dwelt, or rambled much in the country, without being familiar with the rich mellow song of the Blackbird—the *Merle* of the old poets, so called, as VARRO says, from its habit of flying *mera*, or solitary; hence, too, its scientific name *Merula*. In Scotland this is still generally the appellation applied to the bird, as we learn from many allusions to it, which may be found in the compositions of the poetical and other writers of this—

"Land of brown heath and shaggy wood."

Thus the great novelist, in his "Lady of the Lake," makes the forester say—

"Merry it is in the good green wood,
When the *Mavis* and *Merle* are singing;
When the deer sweeps by, and the hounds are in cry,
And the hunter's horn is ringing."

And thus, too, GRAHAME, to whose "Birds of Scotland" we shall frequently have occasion to refer, bids us—

> "List to the *Merle's* dulcet pipe! melodious bird,
> Who, hid behind the milk-white hawthorn spray,
> Whose early flowers anticipate the leaf,
> Welcomes the time of buds, the infant year."

And now we are quoting from this author, we cannot perhaps do better than give the whole of his very poetical, and faithful description of the bird, whose glossy plumes and golden bill distinguish it from all the other feathered songsters, no less than its peculiarly rich, though simple and almost unvaried strain—

> "When snowdrops die, and the green primrose leaves
> Announce the coming flower, the MERLE'S note,
> Mellifluous, rich, deep-toned, fills all the vale,
> And charms the ravished ear. The hawthorn bush,
> New-budded, is his perch; there the grey dawn
> He hails; and there, with parting light, concludes
> His melody. There, when the buds begin
> To break, he lays the fibrous roots; and, see,
> His jetty breast embrowned; the rounded clay
> His jetty breast has soiled: but now complete,
> His partner, and his helper in the work,
> Happy assumes possession of her home;
> While he, upon a neighbouring tree, his lay,
> More richly full, melodiously renews.
> When twice seven days have run, the moment snatch,
> That she has flitted off her charge, to cool
> Her thirsty bill, dipt in the babbling brook,
> Then silently, on tiptoe raised, look in,
> Admire: Five cupless acorns, darkly specked,
> Delight the eye, warm to the cautious touch.
> In seven days more expect the fledgless young,
> Five gaping bills. With busy wing, and eye
> Quick-darting, all alert, the parent pair
> Gather the sustenance which heaven bestows.
> But music ceases, save at dewy fall
> Of eve when, nestling o'er her brood, the dam
> Has stilled them all to rest: or at the hour
> Of doubtful dawning grey; then from his wing
> Her partner turns his yellow bill, and chaunts
> His solitary song of joyous praise.

From day to day, as blow the hawthorn flowers,
That canopy this little home of love,
The plumage of the younglings shoots and spreads,
Filling with joy the fond parental eye.
Alas! not long the parents' partial eye
Shall view the fledging wing; ne'er shall they see
The timorous pinion's first essay at flight.
The truant schoolboy's eager, bleeding hand,
Their house, their all, tears from the bending bush;
A shower of blossoms mourns the ruthless deed!
The piercing anguished note, the brushing wing,
The spoiler heeds not; triumphing his way,
Smiling he wends: The ruined, hopeless pair,
O'er many a field follow his townward steps,
Then back return; and, perching on the bush,
Find nought of all they loved, but one small tuft
Of moss, and withered roots. Drooping they sit,
Silent: Afar at last they fly, o'er hill
And lurid moor, to mourn in other groves,
And soothe, in gentler grief, their hapless lot.
Meantime the younger victims, one by one,
Drop off, by care destroyed, and food unfit.
Perhaps one, hardier than the rest, survives,
And 'tween the wicker bars, with fading weeds
Entwined, hung at some lofty window, hops
From stick to stick his small unvaried round."

A melancholy picture this of pining captivity, and it is one on which most of us have looked, perchance, with little concern for the poor captive. Often may the wicker cage be seen hung up in some dingy lane, or court, or alley, of the smoky town; and often may its plaintive song be heard amid the abodes of squalid poverty, sounding, indeed, in such a situation, like one of sadness and complaint. Such a bird we may imagine it to have been, which Dickens' Tim Linkenwater—that personification of gentle benevolence—rescued from its home of privation and misery, and carefully tended and kept in its blind old age, making of it a friend and companion. But the whole picture is so beautiful and *touching* an exemplification of the great

law of love and kindness, that we cannot resist the temptation to quote it, notwithstanding the objection which may be urged, on account of its fictitious character; it is essentially true to the better part of our nature, and honorable alike to the genial heart of him who depicted it, and to our common humanity:—

"There was not a bird of such methodical and business-like habits in all the world as the blind Blackbird, who dreamed and dozed away his days in a large snug cage, and had lost his voice from old age years before Tim bought him. There was not such an eventful story in the whole range of anecdote, as Tim could tell concerning the acquisition of that very bird; how, compassionating his starved and suffering condition, he had purchased him with the view of humanely terminating his wretched life; how he determined to wait three days and see whether the bird revived; how, before half the time was out, the bird did revive; and how he went on reviving and picking up his appetite and good looks, until he gradually became what—'what you see him now, Sir'—Tim would say, glancing proudly at the cage. And with that Tim would utter a melodious chirrup, and cry, 'Dick;' and Dick, who, for any sign of life he had previously given, might have been a wooden or stuffed representation of a blackbird indifferently executed, would come to the side of the cage in three small jumps, and thrusting his bill between the bars, turn his sightless head towards his old master—and at that moment it would be very difficult to determine which of the two was the happiest, the bird or Tim Linkenwater."

Among the older poets of England, DRAYTON may be cited as alluding to this bird under this name of the *Merle*, he also distinguishes it as the *Woofell*, or as we should say *Ouzel;* in the following lines from the "Polyolbion," both names occur,—

"The *Woofell* near at hand that hath a golden bill;
As nature him had markt of purpose t'let us see
That from all other birds his tune should different be;
For with their vocal sounds they sing to pleasant May;
Upon his dulcet pipe the *Merle* doth only play."

SHAKSPERE gives us another variation of the term Ouzel, when he sings of—

> "The *Woosel cock* so black of hue,
> With orange tawny bill."

By some the bird is known as the Garden Ouzel, or Black Thrush; and it is included in the *Turdinæ*, or Thrush family, by MACGILLIVRAY and other scientific naturalists; as is also the Ring Ouzel (*Turdus torquatus*), sometimes called the Mountain, or White-breasted Blackbird, a songster of very inferior powers to those possessed by our sable-plumed friend, and one which only pays periodical visits to this country, generally arriving in April and departing in October, and dwelling while here, in the hilly and mountainous districts, amid such scenery as a poet in "Blackwood's Magazine" describes, when he says,—

> "From stone to stone the *Ouzel* flits along,
> Startling the Linnet from the hawthorn bough:
> While on the elm tree, overshadowing deep
> The low roofed cottage white, the Blackbird sits,
> Cheerily hymning the awakened year."

By this it will be seen that the Blackbird is an *early* songster, and it is one that not only hails with its burst of joyous melody the "awakened year," but also one that ushers in, with its matin hymn of gratulation, the dawning day; and pleasant indeed it is when "young eyed dawn, stands tip-toe on the misty mountain top," and ere the sounds of busy life have begun to break in upon the holy serenity of nature; while yet grey shadows linger in the vale, and a dewy freshness pervades the atmosphere, to listen to the rich mellow notes of this bird, as they issue forth from copse or hedge-row, and float slowly upon the wings

of the whispering gales, and die away in the dim recesses of some leafy wood, or between the slopes of two verdant hills, that seem bending down to embrace the stream that flows noiselessly at their feet. Pleasant it is, we say, at such a time, to hear the Blackbird's notes, then more rich, and mellow, and soul-thrilling, as it seems to us, than at any other period of the day, save it may be at that "witching hour" described by the Scottish poets as "the gloaming,"—a beautiful and expressive term,—when once again the wearied spirit of striving, struggling humanity, may cast off for awhile its heavy burden of cares and sorrows, and, with the prospect of a season of rest and refreshment before it, go forth into the fields and woodlands, rejoicing like a captive released from gloomy thraldom, or an exile returning to the home of his childhood. BURNS in his address to Pastoral Poetry, says,—

"In gowany glens thy burnie strays,
Where bonny lasses bleach their claes,
Or trots by hazelly shaws and braes,
Wi' hawthorns grey,
Where Blackbirds join the shepherd's lays,
At close o' day."

Thus recognizing the song of this bird as one of the characteristics of a country summer evening; and again he tells us that—

"In days when daisies deck the ground,
And Blackbirds whistle clear;
With honest joy our hearts will bound,
To see the coming year.

And here the bird is recognised as a harbinger of *spring, in which* character also MARY HOWITT—a true *poet of nature*—exhibits it, when—

"Winding through woods where the sweet wilding's blossom,
Puts forth in early spring,
And nodding blue-bells, deck the steep hill's bosom,
And fearless Blackbirds sing."

But not alone in the fresh green spring, and gladsome summer time, may we listen with pleasure to the melody of this bird; it has a requiem for the dying year, as well as a matin hymn for declining day, and not only in this country is it so, but also beyond the wide Atlantic, if we are to believe Mc Lellan, who says—

"In the last days of autumn, when the corn
Lies sweet and yellow on the harvest field,
And the gay company of reapers bind
The bearded wheat in sheaves—then peals around
The Blackbird's merry chant. I love to hear
Bold plunderer, thy mellow burst of song,
Float from thy watch-place on the mossy tree
Close to the cornfield edge."

At this term, "bold plunderer," we are strongly inclined to demur; it is scarcely one which is characteristic of the bird, whose favorite food is of such a kind as man would not care to dispute his appropriation of; insects, and the wild berries which are to be found in the fields and hedges, are what it principally feeds on; and if in time of need it makes some havoc among the cherries, and red currants, or occasionally indulges in a sparing repast of grain or seed, as undoubtedly is the case, yet we see not why it should be obnoxious, on that account, to such an opprobrious term: it is only taking payment, and by no means adequate payment, for the good effected by its worm and slug-destroying beak. We must take every opportunity which is afforded us of endeavouring to correct an erroneous impression which too generally exists in the minds of

those who have to do with the cultivation of the soil. Let our readers be sure of this, that not only the Blackbird, but nearly all birds, are more "sinned against than sinning." Truly may it be said of them that they "do good by stealth," although we could scarcely carry out the quotation, and say that they would "blush to find it fame." It is impossible to measure or calculate the benefit which results to the gardener and agriculturist from their operations, whereas the mischief which they do is obvious and calculable, and they are therefore persecuted and destroyed. Occasionally instances occur in which the vast preponderance of good over the evil effected by them is made manifest, as in that related by a recent writer in "Chamber's Edinburgh Journal," who states that—

"A grass plot attached to a country house, was once visited by a dozen or two of Blackbirds for several days in succession; they ploughed it up so diligently with their bills as to make the surface look rough and decayed. The owner of the property unwilling to shoot the intruders, caused the grass plot to be dug up in several places, when it was found to be overrun with the larvæ of chafers. The birds were left in undisturbed possession; and although the walls were covered with ripe fruit, they left it for the grubs which they effectually destroyed, and the grass plot soon resumed its original appearance. We can fancy (continues the journalist) the humane proprietor here spoken of acquainted with TENNYSON'S thoughtful lines—

> 'Oh, Blackbird! sing me something well;
> While all the neighbours shoot thee round,
> I keep smooth plots of fruitful ground,
> Where thou may'st warble, eat, and 'dwell.'"

But the poet's Blackbird, it seems, was—like many of a more highly gifted and endowed order of bipeds—

a little too much addicted to the pleasures of good eating, and thus it is that he is reproved and cautioned:—

"Yet though I spared thee, kith and kin,
Thy sole delight is sitting still,
With that gold dagger of thy bill,
To fret the summer jennetin.

A golden bill! the silver tongue
That February loved, is dry:
Plenty corrupts the melody
That made thee famous once, when young.

* * * *

Take warning! He that will not sing,
While you sun prospers in the blue,
Shall sing for want, ere leaves are new,
Caught in the frozen palms of spring!"

In almost every temperate region of the earth, may the glossy-plumes—according to BUFFON of a more decided black than even those of the raven—of the Blackbird be seen, and its mellow note may be heard, not only throughout the whole of Europe, but also in Syria, and other parts of Northern Asia. A British traveller BUCHANAN, who many years since penetrated into the rocky fastnesses of the Nepaulese territory, whose rugged mountains may be considered as the first stepping stones to the more lofty Himalayas, brought back word to his fellow-countrymen of the Grampians, that thus closely bordering upon the burning plains of India, he had beheld such well known plants as pine trees and primroses, strawberries and hawthorns, and *had listened to the notes of the Merle*, that bird of home associations. What must have been his thoughts, thousands of miles away from those familiar scenes, amid which he had last heard that sweet music, in a strange rugged land, among a people

of a different faith and a different tongue? What visions of "auld langsyne," must have been conjured up by those magic notes, unlocking the treasure house of memory, and unsealing the fount of the purest and holiest feelings of man's heart. Doubtless he was a youthful lover once, and that familiar strain might have recalled to his recollection such a scene as we may suppose Elgiva looks upon in the play of "Edwin the Fair," when she asks,—

"How long since
Is it, that standing on this compassed window,
The Blackbird sung us forth; from yonder bough
That hides the arbour, loud and full at first,
Warbling his invitations, then with pause
And fracture, fitfully as evening fell?"

Aye, how long since? What an echo these words must have found in the bosom of our traveller, and how involuntarily the question must have risen to his lips—how long will it be ere I again visit the sweet scenes of early life, and behold the faces, and hear the voices, of those who are dear to me? Perchance it was eventide, and he was in some green valley, snugly nestled amid the rugged hills, when his ear first caught the sound of this *home*-bird's song, poured out from a blossoming hawthorn bush, or from amid the dark boughs of a pine tree like that of his native mountains; and then what so appropriate for him to call to mind, and to utter, as the fine devotional lines of EDMESTONE?—

"Sweet bard of the woods! on this still summer even,
How lovely, how soft, and how mellow thy lay!
It is calm as the earth; it is clear as the heaven;
It is soothing and sweet, like the requiem of day!

Oh! what art thou singing? it speaks to my soul,
Methinks I could tell thee the words of thy song;
Pure pleasure and gratitude beam through the whole,
And the summer eve's zephyr conveys it along.

Thou art singing of Him, who gave fruit trees and flowers,
And spread out the woods like a garden for thee,
And bid the warm sun light the midsummer's bowers,
And formed thee a bower on many a tree.

Sweet minstrel! sing on, all in joy as thou art,
My spirit grows calm, and serene by thy lays;
And I think—'tis a thought that enraptures my heart,
Jehovah! all nature is full of thy praise."

But we have dwelt on this picture somewhat too long, we fear, and must now wend our way back from the mountains of Nepaul, the source of the sacred Ganges, to the green vales of our native land, amid which flow streams as bright and pellucid, although not so broad and stately as that which the Hindoo worships; and once again standing, where we best love to stand, amid the balmy stillness of an English summer morning, say, with RICHARD HOWITT,—

"What delicate freshness in the foliage green,
What graceful drooping dwells with every spray,
Now in the rosy light of sunrise seen,
In this clear morning of the joyful May;
Of thy own song and nature's gladness proud,
O Blackbird, singing in love's sweet excess."

We have lost a line or two of this beautiful extract, will the poet pardon us, if we attempt to supply the deficiency?—

In notes melodious, clear, and deep, and loud,
Striving thy full heart's joyance to express.

Naturalists tell us that the peculiar whistle of the Blackbird may be heard at times even as early as January; in March it begins to lay, and from this time until the setting in of the winter, there is little cessation of its strains, except during the hottest period of the year, that is from the middle of July to the end of August, when as GILBERT WHITE

notices, this as well as most other Song Birds, is
tially mute; and only partially so, as it may freque
be heard at that season, morning and evening sen
its rich voice across the meadows and golden c
fields, and even at noon-time, especially should
sky become overcast, and the clouds discharge
watery burdens to refresh the thirsty earth; then
the Yellow-bill Ouzel, as it is termed in a li
British birds given in the "Analyst," pour ou
richest notes, and ruffle its sable plumes, as thou
give them the full benefit of the cleansing sho
and very beautiful plumes they are, notwithstan
their uniformity of colour; of so rich and glossy a l
that the eye rests upon it, as upon sable velvet, w
sense of fullest satisfaction; there is also at ti
about it a metallic lustre, a brilliancy, so to s
which is truly beautiful; and then, too, the golden
of the bill, and of the bottom part of the feet, an
circle round the eye, serve to heighten the effe
this. Indeed, when in full plumage and pe
health, there is, we think, no more handsome
and we are scarcely inclined to agree with the an
mous poet, who says,

"I could not think so plain a bird,
Could sing so sweet a song."

The Blackbird, we have said, begins to lay in M
its first brood is generally hatched about the m
of April, but the fledglings are very commonly
troyed by the inclemency of the weather, to which
are much exposed, on account of the rude mann
which the nest is constructed of rushes, twig
coarse grass, cemented with clay or mud, and

with hay, wool, or hair, having as some affirm, though this seems doubtful, a hole in the bottom to permit the escape of water, with which the nest is at times flooded, being generally placed in low situations, such as near the roots of trees, the bottoms of hedges, &c., where also the eggs and young birds are much exposed to danger from rats or other vermin. The eggs vary greatly both in colour and size, although they are not likely to be mistaken by oologists for those of any other bird; most usually they are of a pale bluish green, freckled with amber; in length an inch and a twelfth; in breadth ten twelfths of an inch. The statement of ARISTOTLE, that the eggs in the first laying are more numerous than in any succeeding ones, has been verified by later naturalists; five or six is the number on which this bird generally sits in March; later in the year it seldom exceeds four, and is very commonly but three, although a remarkable instance is on record which affords a striking exception to this rule. We cannot quote our authority for this fact—

"Early in the spring of the present year, Captain Stevens discovered in an evergreen in his garden, at the front of the house, near Presteign, a blackbird's nest. He watched the industrious couple regularly, and they brought forth five young ones. In due time the brood took to flight. A short time afterwards the old hen laid four eggs, began to hatch, and the young ones came forth; this second brood also flew. The hen then commenced her third batch, having laid four more eggs, and at this time there are four fine young blackbirds in the nest, making thirteen young ones at three broods in the same season."

Nor for the following, which appeared in several newspapers under the head of "Ornithological Anomaly:"

"There is at present over the drawing-room window at Castert parsonage, near Kirkby-Lonsdale, where Mr. W. W. C. Wilso jun. is residing, a nest built by a blackbird and a thrush, whi have paired together, containing one bird, which resembles bo species. It has been placed in a cage close to the nest, and bo the blackbird and thrush may constantly be seen feeding it throu the wires of the cage with worms and caterpillars. Captivity l not abated their affection, for they sit by it just the same, a entirely support it."

Blackbirds and Thrushes, it is well known frequen build in close proximity to each other, but instanc we believe, are very rare of a union of the two speci the former is much the shier bird of the two, is m easily alarmed, and when disturbed in its covert, utt a sharp, chattering kind of cry, which is long continu and which it also frequently emits if any thing in t shape of an enemy approaches the nest of its neighb the Thrush, as if to give a friendly warning of dan to that bird, and to drive off the intruder upon domestic privacy. It is not uncommon for the Bla bird to build in outhouses even, and in situatic where it is constantly exposed to observation and jury, which is somewhat remarkable, when the shy a timid disposition of the bird is considered. Close the garden walk, as BISHOP MANT describes it—

"The overarching boughs between,
Of some selected evergreen,
Of laurel thick, or branching fir,
Or bed of pleasant lavender,
To lodge secure their pendent home;
A well wove frame, with moistened loam
Within cemented, and without
Rough but compactly, all about
With moss and fibrous roots entwined,
And withered bent grass softly lined,

Where may repose, in season due,
Their pregnant balls of chalky blue,
Besprent about the flattened crown
With pallid spots of chesnut brown."

A celebrated chief of the North American Indians was named Blackbird, and it is related of him that at one of the annual distributions of presents by the British Government, he began a speech at sunrise which lasted without intermission till sunset; those who believe in transmigration of souls, might well suppose that such a gift of eloquence would best befit a songster, whose strains are heard from early morn till dewy eve. It was PLINY'S theory that this bird turned red in winter, and here we have an agreement of hue also with the copper-skinned parlarverer of the West. The old Roman naturalist, however, might have been mistaken in this, as he was in many other of his statements: the female bird, it is true, has plumage more approaching to a brown than the male songster, but this can scarcely be called red. In the islands of the Mediterranean, and in some parts of Italy, particularly about the Pyrenees, there is found a blue Blackbird, the song of which is said to be nearly equal to that of the nightingale. Instances of wholly, and partially white—let us avoid the misnomer and say—Ouzels, are not unfrequently met with, and WILLOUGHBY accounted for such a phenomenon by supposing them natives of mountainous districts, where the constant presence of snow had effected the change of colour; but this is not correct, as an *albino* is sometimes found in a nest with others of the natural hue. A stuffed specimen of a cream-colored bird of this species is preserved in the British Museum; and in the

Zoological Gardens, London, there was one some since, which had the head only white, and thi caught in Northamptonshire.

But these, by many of our readers, may be th uninteresting details, let us enliven them by quot conclusion, JAMES MONTGOMERY'S spirited ch exhilirating and musical as the song of the bir addressing.—

"Golden Bill! Golden Bill!
Lo! the peep of day;
All the air is cool and still,
From the elm tree on the hill,
Chant away:
While the moon drops down the west,
Like thy mate upon her nest,
And the stars before the sun
Melt, like snow-flakes, one by one,
Let thy loud and welcome lay
Pour along
Few notes, but strong.

Jet-bright wing! jet-bright wing!
Flit across the sunset glade;
Lying there in wait to sing,
Listen with thy head awry,
Keeping tune with twinkling eye,
While from all the woodland glade,
Birds of every plume and note
Strain the throat,
Till both hill and valley ring,
And the warbled minstrelsy,
Ebbing, flowing, like the sea,
Claims brief interludes for thee:
Then with simple swell and fall,
Breaking beautiful through all,
Let thy Pan-like pipe repeat
Few notes, but sweet!

THE SKY LARK.

The crested herald of the morn that springs
Up from his grassy couch in spiral flight
Seeming to rain down music from his wings,
And bathe his plumage in the fount of light.

THE SKYLARK.

Alauda Arvensis, *Linnæus, Temminck* and *Macgillivray.* L'Alouette, *Buffon.* Die Felderche, *Bechstein.*

"Light from the sod the Lark exulting springs,
Joy tunes his voice and animates his wings;
Bard of the blushing dawn, to him are given
Earth's choicest verdure and the midway heaven:
Hark, the glad strains that charm our wond'ring ears,
As upward still the fearless minstrel steers,
Till wide careering through the solar stream,
A speck, he wanders in the morning beam."

Carrington.

"BARD of the Blushing Dawn"—"Ethereal Minstrel"—"Pilgrim of the Sky"—"Herald of the Morn"—Blithe Spirit!" Such are the terms applied to this sweet songster of the heavens by the poets, and surely well applied. In the whole range of nature's various melodies, we know of nothing so thrilling, so ecstatic, so full of gushing, uncontrollable joy and gladness, as the song of the Lark, heard on a clear spring morning, as high up in the azure dome it soars and sings, as if, indeed, as the old English divine JEREMY TAYLOR says,—"*it had learned music and motion of an angel.*" This is the bird that, according to ELIZABETH BROWNING, has—

"its nest among the gorses,
And its song in the star courses;"

and to which we have all listened, times out of mind, with feelings to which only those highly gifted ones whose lips are attuned to song, and whose hearts are

touched with the true poetic fervour, can give adequate expression; from a few of these only shall we attempt to quote, for a goodly volume might be filled with the poems that have been written on and to the Skylark, which is thus addressed by SHELLEY—that lost, bewildered spirit, wandering in the golden maze of his own splendid imagination—wandering, and whitherward? up, up, to the very fount of light and truth. But, alas! his flight was stayed: the shaft of death found him while he was yet among the clouds—beautiful clouds were they; irradiated with all the glowing tints of the coming morn; whirled, and wreathed, and piled into shapes of fantastic loveliness: beautiful, we say, to look upon, but dangerous to pass through, deadly to remain in. Would that he had lived to reach the clear sky beyond, and to sing—oh, how he would have sung then!—in the full blaze and glory of awakened day. Alas! alas!—

> "A spirit of the sun,
> A soul with all the dews of pathos shining,"

has gone down amid mist and thick darkness; a light is quenched that would have burned clear and steadily—who shall doubt it?—if it had survived its rapid and eccentric passage through the gusty windings, and dense fog-chambers of the regions of doubt, and passion, and intellectual intoxication, amid which it cast such gleams and flashes of preternatural brightness. The gentle, loving soul! The pure, impassioned spirit! What shall we say of it? Nothing condemnatory! nothing harsh! all things pitiful! all things hopeful! God's mercy is infinite; we perchance have greater need of it than he; let us weep over *his* errors, and pray for

forgiveness of *our* sins. Let us endeavour to divest our minds of prejudice when we think of this, or any erring child of humanity, for prejudice, like anger and other uncharitable feelings, is as JEREMY TAYLOR tells us, "a perfect alienation of the mind from prayer, and therefore is contrary to that attention which presents our prayers in a right line to God." And here we may as well continue that beautiful illustration of his, in which the bird of which we are writing is so aptly and poetically introduced.—

"For so have I seen a lark rising from his bed of grass, and soaring upwards, singing as he rises, and hopes to get to heaven, and climb above the clouds; but the poor bird was beaten back with the loud sighings of an eastern wind, and his motion made irregular and inconstant, descending more and more at every breath of the tempest, than it could recover by the libration and frequent weighing of his wings; till the little creature was forced to sit down and pant, and stay till the storm was over, and then it made a prosperous flight, and did rise and sing *as if it had learned music and motion from an angel*, as he passed some times through the air about his ministries here below: so is the prayer of a good man; when his affairs have required business, and his business was matter of discipline, and his discipline was to pass upon a sinning person, or had a design of charity; his duty met with infirmities of a man, and anger was its instrument, and the instrument became stronger than the prime agent, and raised a tempest and overruled the man; and then his prayer was broken, and his thoughts were troubled, and his words went up towards a cloud, and his thoughts pulled them back again, and made them without intent; and the good man sighs for his infirmity, but must be content to lose the prayer, and he must recover it when his anger is removed, and his spirit is becalmed, made even as the brow of *Jesus*, and smooth like the heart of God; and then it ascends to heaven upon the wings of the holy dove, and dwells with God, till it returns like the useful bee, laden with a blessing and the dew of heaven."

Will our *readers* pardon us if we keep them yet a

little while from the beautiful imagery of SHE Ode to the Lark? We are desirous of quoting a passage from an old divine, which can perhaps b appropriately introduced here than elsewhere] HALL, whose writings, like those of the auth quoted, are especially rich in references to the an which may be observed between things natu spiritual, makes this allusion to the Skylark—

"How nimbly doth that little lark mount up, singing heaven in a right line; while the hawk, which is stronger and swifter of wing, towers up by many gradual compasse highest pitch; that bulk of body and length of wing h direct ascent, and requires the help both of air and scope to his flight; but the small bird cuts the air without resista needs no outward aid to speed her flight. Just so is it souls of men, in flying up to heaven. Some are hindered powers which would seem helps to their soaring up thither wit, deep judgment, quick apprehension, send men about small labour, for the recovery of their own incumbrance; v good affection of plain and simple souls, raise them up imm to the fruition of God. Why should we be proud of tha may slacken our way to glory? Why should we be dishearte the small measure of that, the very want whereof may, as t may be affected, facilitate our way to happiness?"

And now for SHELLEY'S magnificent ode, of we must only quote a few of the stanzas—

"HAIL to thee, blithe spirit!
Bird thou never wert,
That from Heaven, or near it,
Pourest thy full heart
In profuse strains of unpremeditated art.

Higher still and higher
From the earth thou springe
Like a cloud of fire;
The blue deep thou wingest,
And singing still dost soar, and soaring ever singest.

In the golden lightning
Of the sunken sun,
O'er which clouds are brightening,
Thou dost float and run;
Like an unbodied joy whose race is just begun.

The pale purple even
Melts around thy flight;
Like a star of Heaven,
In the broad day-light,
Thou art unseen, but yet I hear thy shrill delight.

What objects are the fountains
Of thy happy strain?
What fields, or waves, or mountains?
What shapes of sky or plain?
What love of thine own kind? What ignorance of pain?

With thy clear keen joyance,
Languor cannot be:
Shadow of annoyance
Never came near thee:
Thou lovest; but ne'er knew love's sad satiety.

Waking or asleep,
Thou of death must deem
Things more true and deep,
Than we mortals dream,
Or how could thy notes flow in such a crystal stream?

We look before and after,
And pine for what is not:
Our sincerest laughter
With some pain is fraught;
Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought.

Yet if we could scorn
Hate, and pride, and fear;
If we were things born
Not to shed a tear,
I know not how thy joy we ever should come near.

Better than all measures
Of delightful sound,
Better than all treasures
That in books are found,
Thy skill to poet were, thou scorner of the ground!"

This is indeed a glorious tribute of admiration, a

meed of song such as has been seldom offered to bird or other living creature. How rich is it in poetical imagery, how full of power, and pathos, and passionate energy of feeling; the stanzas which we have been obliged to omit are fully equal to those quoted, and the whole poem is the most perfect thing of the kind that we know of, except, perhaps, KEATS' exquisite ode to the Nightingale, and in this, as in that of SHELLEY to the Lark, there is a most entire adaptation in the style of thought, the nature of the images, and the character of the rhythmical expression, to the bird addressed; and how characteristic, too, are both of them of the minds of the authors; the one all gushing and glowing like a sun-lighted fountain, whose waters leap forth, ever fresh, and ever sparkling, and go dancing away to music of their own creating—a music that amid its thrilling chords of irrepressible gladness, has a monotone of regretful sorrow, finely expressed in that stanza beginning—

> "We look before and after,
> And pine for what is not."

And the other no less passionate, no less intense, scarcely less richly imaginative, and equally musical; but it is music of a different kind, such as one would expect to hear amid the solemn twilight of the leafy woodlands, or in such a dream-land of enchantment, peopled with classic shapes and phantasies, as KEATS loved to dwell in. Very different from either of these, and yet equally characteristic of both bird and poet, is the spirited lyric which we shall next quote: here we have the Ettrick Shepherd, the plaided Mountaineer, JAMES HOGG, singing amid his native heather a song

to the "bonnie Laverock," that almost sets us "lilting" as we listen to it. Hark, now, is it not a right merry and inspiriting strain?

"Bird of the wilderness,
Blithesome and cumberless,
Light be thy matin o'er moorland and lea!
Emblem of happiness!
Blessed is thy dwelling-place!
O to abide in the desert with thee!

Wild is thy lay and loud,
Far in the downy cloud!
Love gives it energy, love gave it birth.
Where, on thy dewy wing,
Where art thou journeying?
Thy lay is in heaven, thy love is on earth.

O'er fell and fountain sheen,
O'er moor and mountain green,
O'er the red streamers that herald the day;
Over the cloudlet dim,
Over the rainbow's rim,
Musical cherub, hie, hie thee away!

Then when the gloaming comes,
Low in the heather blooms,
Sweet will thy welcome and bed of love be!
Emblem of happiness!
Blessed is thy dwelling-place!
O to abide in the desert with thee!"

Hogg, we remember, makes the Lark pour out a strain of love to his brooding mate, such as only a fond and faithful husband could sing with any degree of sincerity; here is the commencement of it—

"Oh, my love is bonny and mild to see,
As sweetly she sits on her dewy lea,
And turns up her cheek and clear grey eye
To list what's saying within the sky!
For she thinks my morning hymn so sweet,
Wi' the streamers of heaven aneath my feet,
Where the proud goshawk hath never won,
Between the grey cloud and the sun,—

And she thinks her love a thing of the skies,
Sent down from the holy paradise,
To sing to the world, at morn and even,
The sweet love-songs of the bowers of heaven."

As we are among the heathery hills and gowany g of Scotland, it will be well to introduce a few n extracts from the poets of that land of poesy anc mance. What says PROFESSOR WILSON?—glor "Kit North," the "old man eloquent," famed s for feats of herculean strength and daring, and scholastic attainments,—the deer-stalker and the mon-spearer, the learned professor of languages, acute critic, the genial-hearted burly man, with a r contagious laugh, and a face like that of an anc prophet—wild, and yet full of meaning: what he?—

"Higher, and higher than ever rose the tower of Belus, soar sings the Lark, the lyrical poet of the sky.—Listen, listen! the more remote the bird, the louder is his hymn in heaven. seems, in his loftiness, to have left the earth for ever, and to forgotten his lowly nest. The primroses and the daisies, a the sweet hill-flowers, must be unremembered in the lofty regi light. But just as the lark is lost—he and his song togetl both are again seen and heard wavering down the sky, and little while he is walking, contented, along the furrows o braided corn, or on the clover lea, that has not felt the plough for half a century."

SCOTT, too, we might quote at considerable len and BURNS, who tells us how—

"The wakened Laverock warbling springs,
And climbs the early sky;
Winnowing blithe her dewy wings,
In morning's rosy eye;"

and many another child of song, whom Scotia cla and owns with pride. But we bethink us that

space is wearing away, and we have not yet entered upon a description of the *haunts*, and *habits*, and *characteristic traits* of this bird, which is the most melodious of an eminently musical family, viz., the *Alaudinæ*, or Alaudine birds, in which family MACGILLIVRAY includes, as British birds, the Pipits, of which there are five distinct species; and the true Larks, of which we have three individual kinds, distinguished as the Sky, Common, or Field Lark, or Laverock; the Wood Lark, of which we shall have more to say by-and-by; and the Shore, or Horned Lark, a rare bird in this country. GRAHAME, addressing the Skylark, says—

> "Thou, simple bird!
> Of all the vocal quire, dwell'st in a home
> The humblest; yet thy morning song ascends
> Nearest to heaven."

And this habit of choosing a lowly place of rest and incubation, is the more remarkable in a creature that delights to pour out its melody so far aloft in the heavens. Poets and moralists have not been slow to notice and to improve this apparent inconsistency in the habits of the bird, and have founded thereon many beautiful analogies; thus, JAMES MONTGOMERY says—

> "The bird that soars on highest wing
> Builds on the ground her lowly nest,
> And she that doth most sweetly sing,
> Sings in the shade when all things rest;
> In Lark and Nightingale we see,
> What honour hath humility."

YOUNG, in his "Night Thoughts," tells us that—

> "Pride, like the eagle, builds among the clouds,
> But pleasure, lark-like, nests upon the ground;"

and WORDSWORTH, in that beautiful address of his to the Lark, which is so full of the pure and earnest de-

votion of a heart thoroughly disciplined, and a mind instructed in the great truths taught alike by Nature and Revelation, if they be properly and prayerfully studied together, teaches us the lesson, that however high we may soar upon the wings of intellectual power, yet, if we are truly wise, we shall never lose sight of our dependence upon God, and our connection with lowly and fallible humanity.—

"Ethereal minstrel! pilgrim of the sky!
Dost thou despise the earth, where cares abound?
Or, while thy wings aspire, are heart and eye
Both with thy nest, upon the dewy ground?—
Thy nest, which thou canst drop into at will,
Those quivering wings composed, that music still.

To the last point of vision, and beyond,
Mount, daring warbler! That love-prompted strain
('Twixt thee and thine a never-failing bond),
Thrills not the less the bosom of the plain!
Yet might'st thou seem, proud privilege, to sing
All independent of the leafy spring.

Leave to the nightingale the shady wood—
A privacy of glorious light is thine,
Whence thou dost pour upon the world a flood
Of harmony with rapture more divine.
Type of the wise, who soar—but never roam,
True to the kindred points of heaven and home."

So much that is beautiful in expression, and good in moral teaching, has been written on the *early* and *heavenward* flight of the Lark, that we feel quite at a loss how to make our selection. Passages from the poets come thronging so thickly upon our memory as we write, that it seems as if an angelic choir were waking their golden harps, and pouring out their hymns of praise, in our presence. It would almost appear like a piece of impertinance for us to occupy much of this limited space with our poor observations, and

ore do we prefer to use them merely as the links
ich to bind together some of the finest of the
and intellectual gems, of which we have so rich
e to choose from. JAMES MONTGOMERY we have
ly quoted, nevertheless we must find space for a
e of his stanzas addressed to a Skylark which he
singing at day break—

"Could I translate thy strains and give,
Words to thy notes in human tongue,
The sweetest lay that e'er I sung,
A lay that would the longest live,
I might record upon this page,
And sing *thy* song from age to age.

But speech of mine can ne'er reveal
Secrets so freely told above,
Yet is their burden joy and love.
And all the bliss a bird can feel,
Whose wing in heaven, to earth is bound,
Whose home and heart are on the ground."

BERNARD BARTON'S noble poem also we must
ntent to take but two stanzas, the two last—

"Bird of the morn! from thee might Man,
Creation's Lord, a lesson take:
If thou, whose instinct ill may scan
The glories that around thee break,
Thus bidd'st a sleeping world awake
To joy and praise—oh! how much more
Should *mind*, immortal, earth forsake,
And man look upward to adore!

Bird of the happy, heavenward song!
Could but the poet act thy part,
This soul, upborne, on wings as strong,
As thought can give, from earth might start:
And he, with far diviner art,
Than genius ever can supply,
As thou *the ear*, might glad *the heart*,
And bring down music from the sky."

d our readers ever see a little square book, to

whose pages the enchanter HARVEY has lent the nations of his pencil? It is entitled "The Story out an End," translated from the German by S AUSTIN, and is commonly classed as a child's it would be well if all we busy men and wome profess to have put away "childish things," ha child-like hearts as to read this little work with spirit of understanding; here is an extract from

"The morning lark soared circling higher and higher length her song was like the soft whisper of an angel holdi verse with the spring, under the blue arch of heaven. T had seen the earth-colored little bird rise up before him, seemed to him as if the earth had sent her forth from her as a messenger to carry her joy and her thanks up to because he had turned his beaming countenance upon her love and bounty."

Is not that a beautiful thought? the book we of is full of such; it is a sort of introduction— and affectionate "come and see"—to that greate which ever lies open for our inspection; a beginn that grand and magnificent "story," which is t the flowers in their blossoming, and the birds i singing, and the stars in their shining, where end is the glory and the blessedness of a divin lation. We have read in a work entitled "the of Life," the following passage, in which the ide the Lark's song is an expression of gratitude is h embodied.—

"Who ever listened to the voice of the lark on a clea morning, when nature was first rising from her wintry be the furze was in bloom, and the lambs at play, and the p and the violet scented the delicious south wind, that came glad tidings of renovated life—who ever listened to the son

lark on such a morning, while the dew was upon the grass, and the sun was smiling through a cloudless sky, without feeling that the spirit of joy was still alive within, around, and above him, and that those wild and happy strains, floating in softened melody upon the scented air, were the outpourings of a gratitude too rapturous for words?"

No less full of the true poetry of nature, and of a healthful sentiment of morality, is that passage in the writings of WASHINGTON IRVING, which runs thus—

"Of all birds I should like to be a Lark. He revels in the brightest time of the day, in the happiest season of the year, among fresh meadows and opening flowers; and when he has sated himself with the sweetness of earth, he wings his flight up to heaven, as if he would drink in the melody of the morning stars. Hark to that note! How it comes thrilling down upon the ear! What a stream of music, note falling over note in delicious cadence! Who would trouble his head about operas and concerts, when he could walk in the fields, and hear such music for nothing?—There are homilies in Nature's works, worth all the wisdom of the schools, if we could but read them rightly; and one of the most pleasant lessons I ever received in a time of trouble, was from hearing the note of a lark."

Who, then, is there among us, so dull, and sluggish of nature, that he would not obey the call of MICHAEL DRAYTON—

> "Up with the jocund lark (too long we take our rest)
> Whilst yet the blushing dawn out of the cheerful east,
> Is ushering forth the day, to light the muse along."

Who would not take his stand upon the breezy hill top, with MILTON—

> "To hear the lark begin his flight,
> And singing, startle the dull night,
> From his watch town in the skies,
> Till the dappled dawn arise."

To join in SHAKSPERE's splendid burst of exultation—

" Hark, hark, the lark, at heaven's gate sings,
And Phœbus 'gins to rise
His steeds to water at those springs,
On chaliced flowers that lies."

And to listen to the voice, which, like that of
" dainty Ariel," or unseen spirit of nature, goes
ing over hill and valley, singing—

" Lo, here the gentle Lark, weary of rest,
From his moist cabinet mounts up on high,
And wakes the morning from whose silver breast
The sun ariseth in his majesty;
Who does the world so gloriously behold,
The cedar tops, and hills seem burnished gold."

The Skylark is a bird well known, and very g
rally distributed, not only over this country, but
over the whole European continent; in the
northerly parts of which it is migratory: with
manifests a partiality for an open cultivated tra
land; in Germany, BECHSTEIN tells us, it most
quents fields and meadows; it has two broods ir
year, the first of which are usually ready to leav
nest in June, and the second in August. A little h
or depression of the ground suffices it for a bui
place, GRAHAME shall tell us how the little arc
fashions the abode of love, a true Agapemone!—

" On tree, or bush, no lark is ever seen:
The daisied lea he loves, where tufts of grass
Luxuriant crown the ridge; there, with his mate,
He founds their lowly house of withered bents,
And coarsest speargrass; next, the inner work
With finer, and still finer fibres lays,
Rounding it curious with his speckled breast.
How strange this untaught art! it is the gift,
The gift innate of Him, without whose will,
Not even a sparrow falleth to the ground."

The eggs, four or five in number, vary somewl
colour and size, they are generally, however,

greenish grey, freckled with brown, ten and a half twelfths of an inch long, and eight and a half twelfths in breadth. JESSE has noticed a use to which the peculiarly long claws of the bird are put, and which has escaped most naturalists; we quote a passage from his delightful "Gleanings in Natural History."

"The Lark makes its nest generally in grass fields, where it is liable to be injured either by cattle grazing over it, or by the mower. In case of alarm from these or other causes, the parent birds remove their eggs, by means of their long claws, to a place of greater security; and this transportation I have observed to be effected in a very short space of time. By placing a lark's egg, which is rather large in proportion to the size of the bird, in the foot, and then drawing the claws over it, you will perceive that they are of sufficient length to secure the egg firmly, and by this means the bird is enabled to convey its eggs to another place, where she can sit upon and hatch them.

When one of my mowers first told me that he had observed the fact, I was somewhat disinclined to credit it; but I have since ascertained it beyond a doubt, and now mention it as another strong proof of that order in the economy of Nature, by means of which this affectionate bird is enabled to secure its forthcoming offspring. I call it affection, because few birds show a stronger attachment to their young.

I have often strained my eyes in watching these birds while they sang their beautiful notes on the wing, till I could see them no longer.

> 'Up springs the lark,
> Shrill-voiced and loud, the messenger of morn;
> Ere yet the shadows fly, he, mounted, sings,
> Amid the dawning clouds.'

If, in his descent, he hears the voice of his mate, you may observe him fall to the earth apparently like a stone.

This, however, does not take place during the period of incubation, or before the young birds have left their nest. At those times I have observed that the lark, in his descent. flies along the surface of the field, and alights at some distance from his nest.

It is evident that this foresight is given to it by its benevolent Creator for the better preservation of its young; as, if it alighted at its nest, the spot might easily be watched, and its young fall a prey to some marauding plough boy."

Against the very common practice of caging larks, Sky-larks in particular, we would enter our most indignant protest; better a thousand times kill and eat them, as many do, than doom to a life of pining captivity, a creature so formed for the enjoyment of freedom in its most unrestricted sense.

We venture to add to the lines already quoted, a few others in which we erewhile endeavored to express an idle fancy of our own, respecting the Skylark.

Methinks thou art—oh, singing Lark!
The soul beatified
Of one who in the early years
Of innocence hath died;
Who nothing knew of fear or care,
Who never felt distress,
Nor gazed into the gloomy gulphs
Of human wretchedness.

Therefore this world was all to thee
A bright and joyous scene,
And every spot thou dwelled'st on
Was sunny and serene:
And still thou lovest to abide
And take thy pleasure here,
Although thou hast a home above,
In yon celestial sphere.

THE BULLFINCH.

The piping Bullfinch, musical and gay,
Docile, and teachable, and full of tricks,
Builds, where the hawthorn blossoms scent the way,
His shallow nest of loosely-woven sticks.

THE BULLFINCH.

Loxia Phrrhula, *Linnæus.* Phrrhula Vulgaris, *Temminck.* Phrrhula Pileata, *Macgillivray.* Le Bouvreuil, *Buffon.* Der Gimpel, *Bechstein.*

Better I love thy wood-notes wild to hear
Than all the melodies that art can teach;
Those untaught strains, so simple, soft, and clear,
Seem ever near akin to human speech;
And greater power have they the heart to reach.
To please, to sooth, to animate, and cheer;
Sweet lessons of content, and hope to preach,
And waken holy thoughts, and memories dear:
Still in thy woodland covert, then, sweet bird!
Utter thy low sweet call-note to thy mate;
Ne'er by the spoiler be the green boughs stirred,
Which shelter thee in thy most happy state;
Ever may thine be liberty and love;
A green world all around, and azure skies above.

H. G. Adams.

WE have some doubts and misgivings on the score of our last chapter—whether our readers might not have thought that we were a little too flighty and imaginative therein; too much in the clouds, and not sufficiently upon earth, for such staid and matter-of-fact people as form the great majority of this workday world. If such a charge should be brought against us, we plead guilty thereto, and rest our defence upon the nature of the subject, and upon the bewilderment of mind and senses caused by those plaguey poets, who, as soon as we began to mention the Skylark, poured out such a flood of "melodious madness," that we could not help being borne away and infected by it, to a far greater extent than we are

likely to be in this, or in any future cl
little work.

The songs which we shall have to quot
finch are few, and of a much more sober c
those dedicated to the " ethereal minstre
we last wrote: there will be no difficulty
here, for Bully has not been a great favo
poets, although he has many amiable a
qualities; and he is a sweet singer, too,
natural song is low and unobtrusive, and
in a wild state are extremely shy, so th
often seen, and he exemplifies the truth of

" Out of sight, out of mind."

Nevertheless, although so seldom seen in
rambles, the Bullfinch, or as some na
it, for an obvious reason, the Coalhood, is
means a rare bird, as according to KNAP
other of his accusers, the gardeners well k
cost. Here is part of the evidence add
him: —

"The bull-finch has no claims to our regard. I
no voice to charm us; it communicates no harmo
all we hear from it is a low and plaintive call to i
hedge. It has no familiarity or association with
retirement in some lonely thicket ten months in the y
as spring approaches, it will visit our gardens an insi
Its delight is in the embryo blossoms wrapped up
the bud of a tree; and it is very dainty and curious
this food, seldom feeding upon two kinds at the
generally commences with the germs of our large
gooseberry; and the bright red breasts of four or
quietly feeding on the leafless bush, are a very pret
consequences are ruinous to the crop. When the cl

to come forward, they quit the gooseberry, and make tremendous havoc with these. I have an early wall cherry, a mayduke by reputation, that has for years been a great favorite with the bull-finch family, and its celebrity seems to be communicated to each successive generation. It buds profusely, but is annually so stripped of its promise by these feathered rogues, that its kind might almost be doubted. The orleans and green-gage plums next form a treat, and draw their attention from what remains of the cherry. Having banqueted here awhile, they leave our gardens entirely, resorting to the fields and hedges, where the sloe bush in April furnishes them with food. May brings other dainties, and the labours and business of incubation withdraw them from our observation."

This certainly is a very grave accusation, nor do we think that it can be altogether disproved. RENNIE, it is true, was disposed to consider that insects inclosed in the bud, and not the bud itself, constituted the favorite food of the bird, and that it only destroyed such as would have been useless, if suffered to remain on the bough. DR. FORSTER, we believe, positively asserts this, and NEVILLE WOOD, always ready to urge whatever may be said in favor of his feathered clients, says—

"It is disputed by Ornithologists, whether or not the Hedge Coalhood is pernicious to the interests of the gardener, by destroying the buds of the fruit trees. In the *Ornithologist's Text-book*, p. 61, I have expressed an opinion in favor of our lovely songster, and subsequent researches have only served to confirm that opinion. That the birds do devour a tolerably large portion of the buds of our fruit trees, there can be no doubt; but then it is most probable that only those buds which are infested with insects, are attacked; and if so, its services in the gardens must be incalculable. In confinement it will eat *any* buds, but in its wild state, it will be observed that the vegetable portion is rejected, and the enclosed insect or grub is the desired object of their search. That such is the case, I have ascertained almost to a certainty, from finding that some

trees are passed over without the slightest injury, while ot not quitted as long as a bud remains; and others again un selection. I have repeatedly observed it examining the bu great care, and am convinced that it does not indiscriminat troy the produce of the trees. It has been remarked by so the finest trees are usually selected as the scene of its depre But this, if anything, is in favour of my argument, as the may reasonably be supposed to make their choice as well birds, and that the birds only attack such trees as are inf these insect pests."

This testimony is also supported by the comp BEWICK's Natural History, and several other w but in the latest supplement to CUVIER, in MU BECHSTEIN, and other works of undoubted aut there is evidence of so strong and condemnatory a that we are obliged to confess with a sigh of that Bully is indeed a sad depredator, and BISHOP MANT has truly described him in the ing lines: —

"Deep in the thorn's entangled maze,
Or where the fruit-tree's thickening sprays
Yield a secure and close retreat,
The dusky Bullfinch plans her seat,
There where you see the clustered boughs
Put forth the opening bud, her spouse
With mantle grey, and jet-like head,
And flaming breast of crimson red,
Is perched with hard and hawk-like beak,
Intent the embryo fruit to seek,
Nor ceases from his pleasing toil,
The orchard's budding hope to spoil.
Unless with quick and timid glance,
Of his dark eye your dread advance
He notice, and your search evade,
Hid in the thicket's pathless shade."

Having admitted thus much, and confessed *great* extent the truth of the charges to whi

Bullfinch is obnoxious, let us, out of the regard whic we have for that, and every other creature which minis ters to man's intellectual gratification, and beautifies this world of humanity, urge NEVILLE WOOD'S plea and say—

"Even supposing that these birds were as baneful to our fruit rees as has been represented, I could not bear to make war upon hem, but, on the contrary, would propose that every nobleman and entleman should set apart some trees purposely for the birds, while he rest could easily be protected by the usual methods. That such proposal would be scouted by all parties, I am well aware, though t is probable that by far the greater quantity of fruit that is pro- luced in the gardens of the nobility and gentry, is either wasted, r sold for the benefit of the sordid gardener. By this plan these eautiful and ornamental birds might be rendered perfectly tame nd familiar, instead of, as at present, shy, secluded, and rarely en. In these matters, however, it is always best to leave people their own ways, especially as they are usually little willing to ter old customs and opinions. But, after what has been said, it ust not be supposed that its chief food consists of buds. Indeed s obvious that this can form but a small portion of its subsistence; ing the summer and autumn it feeds on various kinds of seeds, likewise on the leaves of the chickweed, groundsel, &c."

The Hooded Bullfinch, as this bird is called by MACLIVRAY, who places it in the order *Deglubitrices*, or kers; the family *Passerinæ*, Passerine birds, or rows; and the genus *Phrrhula*, of which it is the individual known to us, is very generally distri- d over the whole of Britain; frequenting most the ed and cultivated districts, where it seeks the r of the groves and thickets, and seldom comes except in search of food; various titles have pplied to it, such as Coal-hood, Tony-hoop, Alp, Nope, &c., most of them having reference to

the peculiarity of its distinctly marked plumage, w
renders it a bird easily recognised when seen, eve
those who are little acquainted with the feath
songsters in their wild state, in which state, as Kn
asserts, "It has no claims to our regard," b
"gifted with no voice to charm," and "comm
cating no harmony to the grove." But Bully is
dently no favorite with this naturalist, and we are
clined to believe that he does it but scant jus
WOOD affirms that its untaught strains are "sv
varied, and melodious," but somewhat desultory,
so low and soft, that they generally escape observa
"The common call-note of the bird," he says, "
short, sweet, plaintive chirp, constantly uttered w
on the perch." It is thus alluded to by THOMP

"The mellow Bullfinch answers from the grove."

BECHSTEIN, too, we find, characterizes the
notes of the bird as "harsh and disagreeable;" v
MUDIE speaks of its "softly modulated whis
WOOD appears to have observed it in its native w
more closely than either of these authorities, an
his evidence, therefore, we must attach the grea
weight. With all the enthusiasm of the profe
ornithologist, he speaks of hunting the bird ou
the recesses of the leafy wood, its home and hi
place, and of following up the interesting pursuit
after day, and week after week, led on by its plain
call which it utters almost incessantly, and w
furnishes the pursuer with a knowledge of its wh
about. He gives a most interesting descriptio
the old birds issuing forth, when all is quiet, from
thick bushes, and after casting fearful and fur

glances around, to ascertain that no danger is present, in which adventure the female is generally the foremost, calling up the young family to join them; these young birds are perhaps four or five in number, of a dull uniform brown colour; for it is not until they are seven or eight weeks old, that the rich glossy black of the head, and the other bright hues which distinguish the adult bird, are assumed. We must give another quotation from this pleasant author, who tells us that—

"The manners of this species are not remarkably brisk and lively, nor even varied, but they are social and pleasing, and nothing can be more delightful than to follow them in their native haunts, and there become acquainted with their peculiar habits. In the distance, the sound of the male's voice is soft and mellow; that of the female greatly resembles it, though they are readily distinguished by a practised ear. Whilst uttering this, a smart twitch of the tail may be observed, and when the female is on the nest, her mate frequently sits for hours together on a neighbouring branch, sounding his plaintive note, or amusing her with his curious whining song. Unless you *see* him singing, you miss the best part of the performance. But it is at all times difficult either to see or hear him—though I have achieved both—and therefore you must be satisfied with what you can get. While singing, it puffs out its plumage, and makes strange contortions with its head. I have frequently watched this interesting manœuvre; but no sooner does the bird find himself observed, than he shrinks to his ordinary size, alarms his mate, and with her flies to a distant tree, where they remain out of sight, but within hearing, waiting the event, and sounding their mellow note."

Why this bird was ever called a Finch, it is difficult to imagine, as it differs greatly both in habits and appearance from all other birds of the Finch family. MUDIE gives us a very spirited and life-like description of it in these words:—

"In shape it is the most compact and neat, and expressive of energy and strength of all our little birds. The outline of its head and bill is as fine as that of the most handsome of the hawks; but the bright black eye has a good deal of the prying expression of that of the magpie. The bill is, with the exception of that of the eagle and hawks, made stronger in proportion than the bill of any other British bird. The attitudes and motions of the bird, while picking buds or berries, are also very elegant; and it has a great command of itself on the perch."

By this naturalist, as by some others, the bird is called a Gross-beak, and with its congener the Pine Gross-beak (*Phrrhula Enucleator*), sometimes, although but rarely, found in the pine forests of Scotland, is said to constitute a genus quite distinct on the one hand from the *Loxias*, or Cross-bills; and on the other from the *Fringillas*, or true Finches, that is as far as British ornithology is concerned, for there are in America and various parts of the world several other birds which are admitted into the Gross-beak family, the main characteristics of which appear to be that the bill is smaller than that of the majority of the Finches, thick in proportion to its length, dark in color, slightly hooked like that of the parrot; tarsi short, toes long, and claws adapted for perching on slender twigs; wings short and rounded; tail full and strong. But so diverse and so arbitrary are the rules upon which various ornithologists have built up their widely differing systems, that it is difficult to say with any degree of certainty, to which class or order a particular bird really does belong. CUVIER contradicts LINNÆUS, and is himself objected to by other authors, who graft their amendments upon his system, and disarrange his arrangements, so that the neophyte

natural history is fairly puzzled and bewildered. hat appears to be wanted is some universally recog-ıed principles of classification; and we take leave suggest that the *savans* of Europe and America, ıo have studied this branch of physical science ›st intently, shall hold a congress, for the purpose rebuilding on some satisfactory basis, the incon-uous structure in which at present are deposited ə result of their painful researches. We want a well-:anged museum, in which we may be sure of finding, its right place, and *correctly* named, the particular ecimen of which we may be in search;—where the llfinch will not be at one time called a Gross-beak, another a Finch, and placed in different orders, d families, and genera.

> "It was a curious mossy cell,
> Woven with twigs, and grass, and hair,
> And, 'mid the moss six nestlings dwell,
> Concealed by apple-blossoms fair.
> 'Tis Bully's nest!' Bethia said,
> 'His head of glossy jet I spy,
> His downy breast of softest red;
> Poor bird! I hear his whooping cry'"

is thus that an anonymous writer describes the st of the Bullfinch, which is built rather later in the ar than that of most other of our native birds, seldom ng commenced until the latter end of April, or the ginning of May; the eggs, four or five in number, › of a bluish white colour, spotted and streaked th grey and brown; they are about nine and a lf twelfths of an inch in length, and seven and a lf twelfths in breadth. M. CHATEAUBRIAND has nished us with a pretty little cabinet picture of the me of the bird during the season of incubation,

which will form an appropriate ornament for our aviary.

"The bullfinch builds in the hawthorn, the gooseberry, and other bushes of our gardens; her eggs are slate-colored, like the plumage of her back. We recollect having once found one of these nests in a rose-bush; it resembled a shell of mother-of-pearl, containing four blue gems: a rose, bathed in the dews of morning, was suspended above it: the male bullfinch sat motionless on a neighbouring shrub, like a flower of purple and azure. These objects were reflected in the water of a stream, together with the shade of an aged walnut-tree, which served as a back-ground to the scene, and behind which appeared the ruddy tints of Aurora. In this little picture, the Almighty conveyed to us an idea of the graces with which he has decked all nature."

Affection and docility appear to be the two most remarkable traits in the character of the Bullfinch; the "terms docile, teachable, and mild," may perhaps be more appropriately applied to that than to any bird with which we are acquainted; while in a state of nature, it usually attaches itself to a single mate, as most naturalists agree, to which it continues faithful, until death dissolves the union; the pair are seldom far apart, and the male bird by its gentle and oft-repeated call note, and playful antics, appears striving to beguile the tedium of watchful incubation, in the duties of which it occasionally shares, hence JENNINGS in his "Ornithologia," makes the female, which it should be observed is also gifted with the power of song, utter these words.—

"We live without law, and we love without care,
And my mate is delighted my feelings to share;
We live without law, and we love without strife,
Oh, what is so sweet as the bullfinch's life?
Our laws are our feelings, which prompt us to show
Affection to all that inhabits below.

From my mate is ne'er heard the harsh word of command;
But a look, always kind, is the wizard's sole wand.
Son of freedom himself, he's the friend of the free,
No constraint could be pleasing to him or to me.
It is thus he insures the Affections' control;
And thus, without law, he possesses my soul.
Come, Man! and learn thou, from the birds of the grove,
What happiness waits on such generous love!"

the *teachable* character of the bird we need no ger evidence than that which is afforded by the by with which it acquires the various tunes and s, which render it so general a favorite; its imi- powers are great indeed, and its memory ly so; an air which it has once thoroughly learned dom forgets. The Germans, whose patience and uity admirably adapt them for the task of in- ing these birds, drive a lucrative trade in "Piping nches," a great number of which are annually ht to this country for sale. DR. STANLEY thus ibes the course of instruction to which they are cted; after stating that the young birds are taken their nests when they are about ten days old, rought up by a person whose care and attention ir wants renders them docile, he says—

school can be more diligently attended by its master, and olars more effectually trained to their own calling, than a ry of bullfinches. As a general rule they are formed into of about six in each, and kept in a dark room, where food usic are administered at the same time; so that when the ended, if the birds feel disposed to tune up, they are natu- clined to copy the sounds which are so familiar to them. As they begin to imitate a few notes, the light is admitted into m, which still farther exhilirates their spirits, and inclines o sing. In some establishments the starving system is adopt- d the birds are not allowed food or light until they sing.

When they have been under this course of instruction in classes some time, they are committed singly to the care of boys, wh sole business it is to go on with their education. Each boy assi ously plays his organ from morning till night, for the instructio the bird committed to his care, while the class-teacher goes regular rounds, superintending the progress of his feathered pu and scolding or rewarding them in a manner which they perfe understand, and strictly in accordance with the attention or disregard they have shown to the instructions of the monitor. round of teaching goes on unintermittingly for no less a period nine months, by which time the bird has acquired firmness, an less likely to forget or spoil the air by leaving out passages giving them in the wrong place. At the time of moulting, the instructed birds are liable to lose the recollection of their tunes, therefore require to have them frequently repeated at that ti otherwise all the previous labour will have been thrown aw There are celebrated schools for these birds at Hesse and Fu from whence all Germany, Holland, and England, receive supp of the little musicians. In some cases the birds have been tau to whistle three different airs, without spoiling or confusing th but in general a simple air, with perhaps a little prelude, is as m as they can remember."

These birds, like human beings, have differe degrees of capacity for receiving instruction, and t price which they fetch varies considerably, in acco ance with the degree of perfection with which th execute the tunes which they have been taught; much as four or five pounds, and even more, havi been given for a bird that had shewn particular ap tude in this respect. BECHSTEIN complains of the wa of musical taste in some of their instructors, wh leads them to perpetrate sad offences against th harmony, and to teach their little protegees lesso which it were much better if they had never be taught, and which, being once acquired, could not

superseded by any more refined. The poet SAVAGE says,

"The Bull-finch whistles soft his flute-like notes;"

and those who have listened to a properly trained bird, as he went through some simple and plaintive melody, will confess that the term "flute-like," is not misapplied here. JAMES MONTGOMERY asks—

"Bully, what fairy warbles in thy throat?"

and he makes the bird reply—

"Oh, for the freedom of my own wild note;
Art has enthralled my voice; I strive in vain
To break the 'linked sweetness' of my chain;
Love, joy, rage, grief, ring one melodious strain."

Shewing that the poor bird, having once learned an air, could in that, and that only, express whatever emotions might agitate his fluttering bosom; he has foregone nature, and become as it were an artificial thing, an instrument that can play but one tune, and *must* play that, or be ever silent.

Numerous anecdotes might be quoted to show how deep and lasting is the attachment of this bird to those who have treated it with kindness and attention; one of the most touching instances of this is a story told by SIR WILLIAM PARSONS an eminent musician, who possessed a piping Bullfinch, which he had taught to whistle "God save the king." On going abroad, he consigned the bird to the care of his sister, with a strict injunction to her to watch over its safety. On returning, his first visit was paid to poor Bully, who he was informed had for some time been in a declining state of health, and was then very ill indeed. Filled with regret, Sir William went into the room where

the cage of his favorite was kept, and
opened the door, put his hand in, and s
bird, which opened its eyes, shook its fe
gered on to the outstretched finger of
master, feebly piped "God save the kin
dead. According to BUFFON, there ha
stances in which Bullfinches, after ha
from confinement, and remained at liber
or more, have recognised the voices o
reared them, and returned to their for
captivity; and others wherein these birds
grief when separated from their masters
Moreover the dislikes of the bird are
strong as its attachments; it remembers
tenaciously as it does a kindness, and a
given of one, the cage of which was t
by some meanly clad persons, and wh
ter went into convulsions at the sight
similarly attired; and eventually died i
caused. Of the extreme sagacity and se
this bird, much more might be related, d
permit; if neglected, or in any way slig
person to whom it has become attached
and refuse to eat for awhile, showing a d
what it plainly considers to be an injusti
ened or roughly handled, it will freque
fits, and even die suddenly. Great c
taken in the selection of its food, which
says should consist principally of hemp a
with occasionally a variety in the shap
endive, chick-weed, or water-cresses; and
liness of its habitation, the purity of the

&c., as the bird is very apt to become sickly, if
refully tended. It has been noticed by GILBERT
E and others, that when fed wholely on hemp
the plumage of the Bullfinch has lost its brilliant
and assumed an uniform sable hue; why this has
ed, no one that we know of has attempted to
n; the same change has been known to occur
the bird has lost a much-loved companion in
ity; probably in both cases it is the effect of
e.

pleasing author of the "Minstrelsy of the
s," relates several very interesting anecdotes of
ird, upon which she has also some touching
these however we must pass over, as we are
ous of giving COWPER's beautiful monody—

IE DEATH OF LADY THROGMORTON'S BULLFINCH.

"Ye nymphs! if e'er your eyes were red
With tears, o'er hapless favourites shed,
O, share Maria's grief!
Her favourite, even in his cage,
(What will not hunger's cruel rage?)
Assassined by a thief.

Where Rhenus strays his vines among,
The egg was laid from whence he sprung;
And though by nature mute,
Or only with a whistle blest,
Well taught, he all the sounds expressed
Of flageolet or flute.

The honours of his ebon poll
Were brighter than the sleekest mole;
His bosom of the hue
With which Aurora decks the skies,
When piping winds shall soon arise,
To sweep away the dew.

Above, below, in all the house,
Dire foe alike of bird and mouse,
No cat had leave to dwell;

And Bully's cage supported stood
On props of smoothest shaven wood,
  Large built, and latticed well.

Night veil'd the pole: all seemed secure:
When led by instinct sharp and sure,
  Subsistence to provide,
A beast forth sallied on the scout,
Long back'd, long tail'd, with whisker'd snout,
  And badger-color'd hide.

Just then by adverse fate impressed,
A dream disturbed poor Bully's rest;
  In sleep he seemed to view
A rat fast clinging to the cage,
And, screaming at the sad presage,
  Awoke and found it true.

For, aided both by ear and scent,
Right to his mark the monster went,—
  Ah, muse! forbear to speak
Minute the horrors that ensued,
His teeth were strong, the cage was wood,—
  He left poor Bully's beak.

O had he made that too his prey;
That beak, whence issued many a lay
  Of such mellifluous tone,
Might have repaid him well, I wot,
For silencing so sweet a throat,
  Fast stuck within his own."

THE LINNET.

Dress'd in a sober suit of brown and grey,
With here and there a tinge of red between,
The Linnet carols out his blithesome lay,
Above his mate within the furze bush green.

THE LINNET.

lla Cannabina, *Linnæus* and *Temminck*. Linaria Cannabina, *Macgillivray*. La Linotte, *Buffon*. Der Lanning, *Bechstein*.

"On the hawthorn spray
The Linnet wakes her temp'rate lay;
She haunts no solitary shade,
She flutters o'er no sunshine mead;
No love-lorn griefs depress her song,
No raptures lift it loudly high,
But soft she trills amid th' aerial throng,
Smooth, simple strains of soberest harmony."

Mason.

MACGILLIVRAY includes in his "Manual of British Birds," four distinct species of Linnets, which he classes by themselves, under the ric term *Linota*. SWAINSON places them in a family of the genus *Linaria*, which he honors with euphonious title of *Cocothraustinæ*—what a hard e to be thrown at such a group of sweet, simple birds! With MUDIE these are all Finches, and aps if we pursue our inquiries further into the inth of systems and classifications, we shall find turned into Geese, so we will e'en rest contented ur happy ignorance, and call them Linnets, or as Scotch would say, Linties,—

"The Lintie on the heathery brae,
(Where lies the nest amang the ferns)
Begins to lilt at break o'day,
And at the gloaming hails the sterns."

an anonymous poet, quoted by NEVILLE WOOD, s, alluding no doubt to the Brown, Grey, Rose, in, or Greater Redpole Linnet, as it is variously

called, and well known as a sweet, though means a powerful songster; a little modest creature, with sober-tinted plumage, and unob yet pleasing manners; a pleasant household com and a cheerful object in the summer landscape; e no great degree of admiration, and yet som general favorite. Bird-catchers—a malison o cruel craft!—will tell you that the little Brc Grey Linnet, finds a ready sale; and poets, not have sung its praises, as we shall presently MASON, who well describes the "temp'rate lay" bird, we have already quoted, and a nameless S poet, whose fellow-countryman GRAHAME shall l us with the next poetical picture which we pres our readers.—

> "When whinny braes are garlanded with gold,
> And, blythe, the lamb pursues, in merry chase,
> His twin around the bush; the Linnet, then,
> Within the prickly fortress builds her bower,
> And warmly lines it round, with hair and wool
> Inwove. Sweet minstrel, mays't thou long delight
> The whinny know, and broomy brae, and bank
> Of fragrant birch! May never fowler's snare
> Tangle thy struggling foot! Or, if thou'rt doomed
> Within the narrow cage thy dreary days
> To pine, may ne'er the glowing wire (Oh, crime accurs
> Quench, with fell agony, the shrivelling eye!
> Deprived of air and freedom, shall the light
> Of day, thy only pleasure, be denied?
> But thy own song will still be left; with it,
> Darkling, thou'lt soothe the lingering hours away;
> And thou wilt learn to find thy triple perch,
> Thy seed-box, and thy beverage saffron-tinged."

With BURNS the Linnet was an especial fa if we may judge from the frequency with wh *mentions it*; here are two or three of his allusic

"Through lofty groves the cushat roves,
The path of man to shun it;
The hazel bush o'erhangs the thrush,
The spreading thorn the linnet."

* * *

"The mother linnet in the brake
Bewails her ravished young;
And I for my lost darling's sake,
Lament the live-day long."

* * *

"In vain to me the cowslips blaw,
In vain to me the vi'lets spring;
In vain to me in glen or shaw,
The mavis and the *lintwhite* sing."

re we have another term frequently applied to
d by BURNS and other Scottish poets — the
te. In what this name originated, it would
be difficult to tell; not, we should imagine,
ıe color of any portion of its plumage, the
ıg tints of which are brown, and yellowish grey,
ıixture of red, more or less distinct in different
als, and at various stages of the bird's exis-
vhich will account for its being sometimes
ıe Grey, sometimes the Brown, and sometimes
e Linnet. Two of the above quotations, it will
are of a sad and desponding character; we
w give another from the same poetic brain,
ı full of hope and promise; fresh and joyous as
ng-time of life, and the fair young creature on
; was written—

"Within the bush her covert nest
A little linnet fondly prest,
The dew sat chilly on her breast
Sae early in the morning;
She soon shall see her tender brood,
The pride and pleasure o' the wood,
Amang the fresh green leaves bedewed,
Awake the early morning.

So thou, dear bird, young Jeannie fair,
On trembling stranger vocal air,
Shall sweetly pay the tender care,
That tents thy early morning."

With SCOTT, too, we find that there is this association between the song of the Linnet and the period of early freshness.—

"At morn the black-cock trims his jetty wing,
'Tis morning prompts the linnet's blithest lay;
All nature's children feel the matin spring
Of life reviving with reviving day."

MUDIE gives a very good description of the Common Linnet, or as he calls it, the Greater Redpole Finch, and enters somewhat fully into its various changes of plumage, which have given rise to much confusion among those who have attempted to identify the bird by means of its livery, and, as we doubt not, some such angry altercations, in which

"Both were right and both were wrong,"

as the fable tells us once arose about a chamelion; and, to make the matter more puzzling, besides this grey, brown, or red-coated gentleman, as the case may be, there is also a Green Linnet, so that one of the disputants in such a quarrel might well exclaim—

"'Tis green, 'tis green, sir, I assure ye."

About this Green Linnet we shall have more to say presently. Some of the causes of the confusion which exists with regard to the distinct species of these birds are thus explained, by the naturalist above named.

"If the males are taken young, they moult into the winter plumage, and do not change it; if they are taken in the flocking time, *they retain the* brown plumage in their moults; and if they are *captured in the* summer, which, from the wildness of their haunts

and the wild habits of the birds, is not a very common case, they lose the red on the first moult, and never regain it afterwards. In summer, too, the female is very apt to be mistaken for the male. When one comes suddenly upon him, attracted by his song, which in the wilds is particularly cheerful, he instantly drops into the bush, before his plumage can be very carefully noticed; and if one beats the bush, out hops a brown bird, the female, and gets credit for the song of her mate.

The deception, or the mistake, is further increased by the male ceasing his song and raising his alarm-call as soon as he is seen, and until he disappears in the bush, for he does not generally fly out; but the female does, and, as is the habit of the female in many birds, she offers herself to the enemy, that is, tempts him by short flights to wile him away from the nest; and when the coast is clear, she again flies into the bush, chirping softly the note of safety; and soon after the male resumes his song. Thus, though it is the male that is heard, it is the female that is most frequently seen."

Some naturalists assert that the plumage of this bird changes when placed in a state of confinement from red to grey; and hence JAMES MONTGOMERY makes it say, when thus addressed—

> "Sweet is thy warble, beautiful thy plume,
> ——Catch me and cage me, then behold my doom;
> My throat will fail, my colour wane away,
> And the *red* linnet soon become a *grey!*"

And BECHSTEIN seems to show that this is not altogether a poetic fiction, when he says of these birds, that those—

"brought up in the house never acquire the fine red on the forehead and breast; but remain grey like the males of one year old; on the other hand, old ones red when brought into the house, lose their beautiful colours at the first moulting, and remaining grey like the young ones, are no more than grey linnets."

"*Instructed,*" as he says, "by long experience and

the observations of many years," this author attempts to prove that the Common Linnet (*Fringilla linota*); the Greater Redpole (*Fringilla cannabina*); and the Mountain Linnet (*Fringilla montana*) of Linnæus, are one and the same bird, in different states of plumage. Whether this is a correct view of the matter we cannot decide, but by WILSON, SELBY, WOOD, and many others, the last named bird, at all events, is recognized as a distinct species, so that authorities are decidedly against it. The Mountain Linnet seems to be the bird best known in the northern parts of Scotland and the Scottish isles, where, according to MACGILLIVRAY, it is very abundant, being generally called the Twite, or Heather Lintie; it is probably to this bird, and not to the one common in the southern parts of Britain, that many of the Scottish poets allude, and to which the following lines, by an anonymous author, are addressed

"I wadna gie the Lintie's sang
Sae merry on the broomy lea,
For a' the notes that ever rang,
From a' the harps o' minstrelsy!
Mair dear to me where buss or breer
Amang the pathless heather grows,
The Lintie's wild, sweet note to hear,
As on the ev'ning breeze it flows."

WOOD has placed these lines at the head of his account of what he, following BLYTH, calls the Redpole Linnet; the Lesser Redpole of MACGILLIVRAY, the *Fringilla Linaria* of LINNÆUS; but they are scarcely applicable, inasmuch as that this is a bird chiefly found in the midland English counties, and is not likely, therefore, to be known to a poet of the north. The author

om we have here cited, mentions an interesting
:dote illustrative of its docility and attachment to
se who feed and treat it kindly.

In confinement it is easily preserved, and soon becomes tame familiar. One that I saw in London some years ago, would out of its keeper's hand, and refused its liberty when it had ierous opportunities of escaping. The person who possessed it le to me in July 1835, to say that it had reared a flourishing d, which were all as tame and fearless as the parent, although little pains had been taken to render them so. When about six ks old, the cage containing the whole family was placed in the len, with full liberty to escape. The old male first hopped out, no sooner did he find himself free, than he flew away and was r seen afterwards. But even this example was not followed by rest of the family. The female then led forth her progeny, and flew to some tall trees in the garden. The cage was now with-n, and the windows of the house were shut, in order to observe the birds would act. For several hours they continued gaily ing about amongst the trees, but a little before dusk they be-ed great eagerness to obtain admittance into the house. Finding impracticable, they settled on the head and shoulders of their er, but would not suffer themselves to be captured, though they eadily from the hand. Soon afterwards the cage being brought, whole family entered and were shut in. These birds are still in health, though in the end they will probably go the way of all birds, and fall into the jaws of Grimalkin."

As we are speaking of the different species of birds wn as Linnets, we may as well go through the list, so conclude this part of our subject, although we e no hopes of giving a very clear explanation of the inctive characteristics of each, because, as we have eady shown, authorities differ on this head. We e, it will be remembered, beside the immediate ject of our paper, the Common, or Whin Linnet, or

Greater Redpole, spoken of the Twite, or Mountain Linnet, and the Lesser Redpole: we now come to the Mealy Linnet, the *Linaria Canescens* of GOULD, who gives a beautiful representation of it in his "Birds of Europe." BLYTH says of this bird, which is somewhat rare—

"I have now repeatedly heard the song of the Mealy Linnet, which differs from that of the species with which it has been confounded. Its call-note is precisely similar to that of the Redpole Linnet, but its song less resembles that of the Common Goldwing. The call-note is introduced equally often, but is intermingled with a low harsh note, somewhat like that of the Mountain Linnet, but not nearly so loud. It is the most musical of the four British species."

We have now only to remark upon the Green Linnet, about which naturalists differ greatly, some calling it a Grosbeak, and some a Finch. MACGILLIVRAY, adopting the views of C. L. BONAPARTE, places it in a genus by itself, which he calls *Chlorospiza*—there's a name again! and to this generic title of distinction, he adds *chloris* to mark the individual, happily all unconscious of these ugly epithets. BECHSTEIN, speaking of the *attractive qualities* of this, the *Le Verdier*, or Green Bird of Buffon, says—

"Without being handsome its song is not disagreeable; it may also be taught to repeat words; but its greatest merit is the wonderful ease with which it is tamed, equalling, and even surpassing the bullfinch in this particular. It may not only be accustomed to go and return again, but also to build in a room near an orchard, or in a summerhouse in the garden."

We learn further from this authority, that sportsmen and bird catchers mention three kinds of Green Birds, viz., the large, whose plumage is of an uniform bright

yellow tint; the middle-size, which has this tint only on the under part of the body; and the little, which is more of a green color; but these are all, no doubt, the same bird, in different stages of growth, or under various modifying circumstances. The Green Linnet is usually a strong, healthy bird, and will live a great while in confinement, instances have been known of its doing so for a period of twelve years; it sometimes breeds while in this state with canaries, but the offspring of this union, are, the German naturalist tells us, always bad singers. We must not forget the beautiful lines by WORDSWORTH to

"THE GREEN LINNET.

Beneath these fruit-tree boughs that shed
Their snow-white blossoms on my head,
With brightest sunshine round me spread
Of spring's unclouded weather;
In this sequestered nook how sweet
To sit upon my orchard-seat,
And birds and flowers once more to greet,
My last year's friends together.

One have I marked, the happiest guest
In all this covert of the blest:
Hail to Thee, far above the rest
In joy of voice and pinion!
Thou Linnet! in thy green array,
Presiding Spirit here to-day,
Dost lead the revels of the May;
And this is thy dominion.

While birds, and butterflies, and flowers
Make all one band of paramours,
Thou, ranging up and down the bowers,
Art sole in thy employment:
A Life, a Presence, like the Air
Scattering thy gladness without care,
Too blest with any one to pair;
Thyself thy own enjoyment.

Upon yon tuft of hazel trees,
That twinkle to the gusty breeze,
Behold him perched in ecstacies,
Yet seeming still to hover;
There! where the flutter of his wings
Upon his back and body flings
Shadows and sunny glimmerings,
That cover him all over.

My dazzled sight the bird deceives,
A brother of the dancing leaves;
Then flits, and from the cottage-eaves
Pours forth his song in gushes;
As if by that exulting strain,
He mocked and treated with disdain
The voiceless Form he chose to feign,
While fluttering in the bushes."

The nest of the common, or Whin Linnet, so called no doubt from the circumstance of its frequenting downs and open moors abounding in furze bushes, or "whins," as they are frequently termed, is usually constructed of moss, fine twigs, and fibres, interwoven with wool and other substances of the like nature, it is thus described by DARWIN—

"The busy birds with nice selection cull
Soft thistle-down, grey moss, and scatter'd wool;
Far from each prying eye the nest prepare,
Form'd of warm moss, and lined with softest hair.
Week after week, regardless of her food,
The incumbent Linnet warms her future brood:
Each spotted egg with ivory bill she turns,
Day after day with fond impatience burns;
Hears the young prisoner chirping in his cell,
And breaks in hemispheres the fragile shell."

There are commonly from four to six eggs, which are of a bluish white color, marked all over, but most thickly at the larger end, with reddish brown, or purplish grey spots; the average length of these eggs is nine twelfths of an inch, their breadth six and a *half twelfths*.

"A cradle for the Greenbird's bed,
And prickly covert o'er her head,
The forked pine supplies. A hole
In wall, or tree's decaying bole,
The Oxeye's artless nest receives.
With thickening shroud of sprouting leaves,
The quickset hawthorn's prickly spines
Or gooseberry's, where the *Linnet* twines,
His house compact, or cove within,
The shrubby and close clustered whin,
'Gainst eye or hand a shelter throw,
And barrier from invading foe."

is that BISHOP MANT speaks of the situation chosen by this bird for building, a thick prickly some kind being preferred. WOOD states that frequently builds in wall-fruit trees, and espe- ars, and that the young seldom leave the nest ey are fully fledged, when their plumage is t darker in color than that of the adult birds, and female of which are so similarly attired s difficult to distinguish them. Allusion has been made to the changes which take place in of the feathers of these birds, giving the im- in some instances, that there were distinct Before the spring moult of the second year, "grey" or "brown" has been applied to them, rwards they were called "Red-breasted Lin- Between their summer and winter clothing pears to be a considerable change of color, it is scarcely to be expected that they consult k of fashions." MANT alludes to this change his description of October—

"Or mark the flocks of Linnets *grey*,
Start from the sheltering hedge beneath,
And flutter o'er the furze clad heath.

See from their white, plumed fronts are fled,
The dusky throat, the flaming red,
Till spring again with love illume
The lustre of each blood-bright plume."

The male Linnet, WOOD tells us, "does not
its adult tints till the spring of the second ye
seldom attains its full beauty till the third year
life. Nothing can then be more lovely than the
red scarf on the head and breast, especially wh
sun shines on them." It is, in truth, a very
and a pleasing bird, docile, and affectionate, and
and although we cannot quite agree with the o
MICHAEL DRAYTON, and say—

"To Philomel the next, the Linnet we prefer,"

yet has this little bird a very high place in our
tion, and dearly do we love to hear, especially
"sabbath of the year" a calm and bright autun
its sweet melody, which, as WHIFFIN says,—

"Breaks the crystal air in sounds that gush,
Clear as a fountain from its jasper base,
And warm as if its little heart would rush
To ruin with the music."

Many a lovely spot could we describe, oh re
time and space permitted, where we have linge
tening to the melody of birds, many a spot which
the very home of beauty and of harmony, such
late DILNOT SLADDEN, in his fine poem "the S
Beauty," depicts—

"Close by the levelled oak with twisted stem,
The lowly hawthorn blooms in simple grace,
Where oft the Linnet builds her curious nest,
And from the topmost twig in freedom sings,
To lull her downy young ones to repose."

must forbear, having yet much interesting hich we would fain include in this sheet. The extract, from "the Journal of a Naturalist," l of characteristic traits of the bird of which riting, to be omitted, or curtailed—

ober, domestic attachments of the hedge sparrow please not less charmed with the innocent, blithesome gaiety of *fringilla linota*.) But this songster is no solitary visitor lings: it delights and lives in society, frequenting open nd gorsy fields, where several pairs, without the least ontention, will build their nests and rear their offspring e neighbourhood, twittering and warbling all the day s duty over, the families unite, and form large associa- ng and moving in company, as one united household; ng to the head of some sunny tree, they will pass hours yment of the warmth, chattering with each other in a low note; and they will thus regularly assemble during any oright gleam throughout all the winter season,—

'And still their voice is song,'

rd at some little distance, forms a very pleasing concert, id joyous. The linnet is the cleanliest of birds, delight- ole in the water and dress its plumage in every little rill y. The extent of voice in a single bird is not remark- more pleasing than powerful; yet a large field of furze, sunny April morning, animated with the actions and usic of these harmless little creatures, united with the r and odour of this early blossom, is not visited without n and pleasure."

ERT WHITE also alludes to their habit of asso- n flocks or families, when the breeding season nd of singing at intervals far into the winter; W. JARDINE, in one of his notes to WILSON'S ology'" observes—

one who has lived much in the country, must have often

remarked the common European Linnet congregating to close of a fine winter's evening, perched on the summit of tree, pluming themselves in the last rays of the sun, chirr commencement of their evening song, and then bursting s ously into one general chorus, again resuming their sing and again joining, as if happy at the termination of their ployment."

The Portuguese poet, CAMOENS, we recolle very sweet little song, in which this bird is int as one of the harbingers of spring; here is LORD FORD'S version of it—

"Flowers are fresh and bushes green,
Cheerily the Linnets sing;
Winds are soft and skies serene,
Time, however, soon shall bring
Winter's snow
O'er the buxom breast of spring.

Hope that buds in Lover's heart,
Lives not through the scorn of years;
Time makes love itself depart,
Time and scorn congeal the mind;
Looks unkind
Freeze affection's warmest tears.

Time shall make the bushes green,
Time dissolve the winter's snow,
Winds be soft and skies serene,
Linnets sing their wonted strain,
But again,
Blighted bud shall never blow."

The Irish poet, DERMODY, sings a touching s "the sensitive Linnet," which, however, we m ourselves the pleasure of quoting; and NORTH his fable of "the Linnet and the Nightingale, the former bird thus modestly urge a plea and for its simple and pleasing warble—

"I only sing because I love the art;
I envy not indeed, but much revere

Those birds whose fame the test of skill will bear
I feel no hope aspiring to surpass,
Nor with their charming songs my own would class;
Far other aims incite my humble strain,
Then surely I your pardon may obtain,
While I attempt the rural vale to move
By imitating of the lays I love."

ıust now give an anecdote from STANLEY'S ır History of Birds," showing that the Linnet, ' timid as it is, will become bold enough when l by affection for its offspring—

. be more interesting than the affection of the two linnets we ;o mention? A nest containing four young ones, scarcely ıs found by some children, who resolved to carry them ;he purpose of rearing and taming the young birds. The ttracted by their chirping, continued fluttering round the ill they reached the house, when the nest was carried up ıe nursery, and placed outside the windows. The old birds vards made their appearance, approached the nest, and fed without showing alarm. This being noticed, the nest fterwards placed on a table in the middle of the apart- the window left open. The parent-birds came boldly in eir offspring as before. Still further to put their attach- e test, the nest and young ones were placed within a bird- the old ones returned, entered boldly within the cage, ed the wants of their brood as before, and towards evening ırched on the cage, regardless of the noise made around ;everal children. This continued for several days; when ; accident put an end to it. The cage had been again set side of the window, and was unfortunately left exposed to and heavy fall of rain; the consequence was, that the ıe young were drowned in the nest. The poor parents, so boldly and indefatigably performed their duty, con- ering round the house, and looking wistfully in at the ır several days, and then disappeared."

ınnot resist the temptation to quote a graceful

lyrical effusion from the French of BERQUIN, as rendered by STEPHEN PRENTIS, it is entitled—

"THE LINNET'S NEST.

I have it, the nest of the linnet!
The prize it is—two, three, and four!
How long have I waited to win it,
And wanted to take it before!—
Ah! struggle and cry as ye will,
Little rebels your labour's in vain;
For see, ye are featherless still,
And idle it is to complain.

But surely the mother I hear,
Her bosom with agony wrung,
—It is she! and the father is near,
Lamenting the loss of his young!
And I, then, can deal 'em the stroke,
Who laid me in summer along,
And under the boughs of an oak
Fell asleep to the sound of their song.

Alas! should a kidnapper come,
And rob my poor mother of me,
How soon would she sink to the tomb!
How wretched my father would be!
Yet I for your darlings could climb
To your nest in a barbarous mood,
—No, no, I repent me in time,—
There take back your innocent brood.

Go, teach 'em to flutter and fly,
As ye in your earliest spring;
By dulcet degrees by and by
Go teach 'em to twitter and sing;
And I, when the season has broke,
Will lay me in summer along,
And under the boughs of an oak
Fall asleep to the sound of their song!"

THE REDBREAST.

The household bird that to the window comes,
With cheerful song when other birds are mute,
And deems a rich reward, the scatter'd crumbs,
Man's pensioner, clad in red and russet suit.

THE ROBIN.

Motacilla Rubecula, *Linnæus.* Sylvia Rubecula, *Temminck.* Erithacus rubecula, *Macgillivray.* Le Rouge-gorge, *Buffon.* Das Rothkelhchen, *Bechstein.*

"The Redbreast, sacred to the household Gods,
Wisely regardful of the threat'ning sky,
In joyless fields, and thorny thickets, leaves
His shivering mates; and pays to trusted man
His annual visit. Half afraid, he first
Against the window beats; then, brisk, alights
On the warm hearth; then hopping o'er the floor,
Eyes all the smiling family askance,
And pecks, and starts, and wonders where he is;
Till, more familiar grown, the table crumbs
Attract his slender feet." *Thompson.*

"I HAVE heard," says MACGILLIVRAY, "of a closet naturalist, who slighting the labours of a brother of the field, alleged that he could pen a volume on the Robin; but surely if confined to the subject, written in the manner of the Classification of Birds in Lardner's Cyclopædia, and without the aid of fable, it would prove a duller book than Robinson Crusoe." Now we are free to confess that we belong to that order of naturalists, to which the term "closet" is here somewhat slightingly applied; and it seems to us, that we, too, could pen a volume on the Robin, and make it exceedingly interesting, without the aid of fable, although it should be very different from a mere scientific classification of orders and genera. A duller book than De Foe's immortal production perhaps it might prove, and yet not be so very dull either. There

is much in natural history, even if an author confines himself to strict and literal facts, to instruct the heart and delight the understanding; and if he call in the aid of memory and association, he may, without wandering into the misty region of fable, find sufficient material for his purpose, even when writing on the least known and admired of God's living creatures. How easy, then, is his task, when he essays to place before his readers an account of so lively, and familiar, and interesting a bird as the Robin Redbreast; spruce Robinet, the cheerful Ruddock, as he is called in some districts, welcomed and loved alike by old and young:—the bird to which CARRINGTON addresses these fine lines, in the sentiment of which all must cordially sympathize:—

"Sweet bird of Autumn, silent is the song
Of earth and sky, that in the summer hour
Rang joyously, and thou alone art left
Sole minstrel of the dull and sinking year.
But trust me, warbler, lovelier lay than this,
Which now thou pourest to the chilling eve,
The joy-inspiring summer never knew.
The very children love to hear thy tale,
And talk of thee in many a legend wild,
And bless thee for those touching notes of thine!
Sweet household bird, that infancy and age
Delight to cherish, thou dost well repay
The frequent crumbs that generous hands bestow:
Beguiling man with minstrelsy divine,
And cheering his dark hours, and teaching him
Through cold and gloom, autumn and winter, HOPE.
Who feeds the fowls of air, shall He forget
His own elect ones, who their every want
To Him in prayer and thankfulness make known?"

It is, indeed, truly a "household bird," and one round which home memories and associations most fondly cluster; a lively and pleasant feature in the

when there is least in the outward aspect of to cheer and gladden us, and we love it accord- vith an affection such as we bestow upon few rrational creatures. How cheerily sounds its weet warble, amid the gloom and silence of a s day. How brightly gleams the ruddy breast, ted with the dull, leaden-coloured sky; the naked branch; or the snow-covered earth! s there to whom the Robin is not a welcome t, and to whom these sweetly simple lines, by NNER, seem other than appropriate?

"Come sweetest of the feathered throng,
And soothe me with thy plaintive song:
Come to my cot devoid of fear,
No danger shall await thee here:
No prowling cat with whisker'd face
Approaches this sequestered place:
No school boy with his willow bow,
Shall aim at thee the murderous blow:
No wily lime-twig here molest
Thy olive wing, or crimson breast.
Thy cup, sweet bird! I'll daily fill
At yonder cressy, bubbling rill;
Thy board shall plenteously be spread
With crumblets of the nicest bread;
And when rude winter comes, and shows
His icicles and shivering snows,
Hop o'er my cheerful hearth, and be
One of my peaceful family:
Then soothe me with thy plaintive song,
Thou sweetest of the feathered throng."

we suppose that the part which the Robin is to play in the well known story of "the Babes in ood," had its origin in any other than a deeply- , and widely-diffused sentiment, in favor of the It is in such fables as these, that popular feel- nd superstitions are embodied, and made mani-

fest, so that the likes and dislikes of a people may l surely traced in their national ballads, not one of whi is more beautiful and pathetic, than that wherein t untimely fate of the fair children is so sweetly a touchingly described, and in which it is said—

"No burial these pretty babes
Of any man receives;
But Robin Redbreast painfully
Did cover them with leaves."

In a poem entitled "England," by JOHN WALKE ORD, we find these simple lines, expanded into a fi Spenserian stanza—

"And at their graves no virgins clad in white
Attended, and no minstrelsy was heard,
But they were gathered to eternal night
By the dear love of what? a helpless bird!
Who sung their dirges and each corpse interred,
Gathering the sweetest leaves of all the wood,
And shrouding them of its own sweet accord,
So that they slept in holiest solitude,
Where nature was their tomb, and no one might intrude."

Ever mingled with the feeling of pity, called forth b this story of helpless innocence, perishing thus untimel is one of love for the bird, which so "painfully," th is, tenderly—carefully, performed the last sad rites sepulture, and sung a requiem over the dear childre at the account of whose cruel death many a youn heart has bled, and for whom many youthful eyes, an for that matter, older ones, too, have shed tears o sorrow; even as, according to the nursery rhyme, di all "the birds of the air"—

"When they heard the bell toll for poor cock Robin,"

slain by the wicked sparrow, no doubt for sheer envy at the universal regard in which Robinet was held.

But a field naturalist would perhaps tell us that we are now getting very deep indeed into the region of fable, and call us back to the terra firma of fact, to which we shall endeavor to keep, at all events, until we get to the end of this chapter; not that we are ready to admit that fables are at all times, or generally, pure fictions; they embody thoughts, and feelings, and beliefs, which have their origin in truth, if they be not at all times themselves literal verities. The matter-of-fact field naturalist, however, tells us, that—"The Robin is a privileged bird, spared even by Cockney sportsmen, every one looking at him as a friendly and pleasant little fellow, whose company is never tiresome;" and therefore we speak advisedly, when we give him the praise which is justly his due, and feel that we are fully authorised to quote the "mad poets," who have sung the praises of our little favorite, which with J. A. WADE, we observe, is the bird of memory and of pity.—

"This was the home of Memory, the grave
Was Pity's,—both were handmaids of the queen;
The first was absent from her lonely cave,
The other cold beneath the turf so green;
A Robin's nest above her tomb was seen,
Within the leaves that crowded there to shade
The grassy hillock, all around had been
Touched by some sacred sympathy, and made
A cloister for sad hearts, whose hope had been betrayed."

This is quite in accordance with the feeling which has prompted so many a poet, when selecting some green spot of earth, where, when life's "fitful fever" is over, he may rest in peace, to wish that—

"There the earliest flowers may spring,
And there the Redbreast build and sing."

As an introduction to a more precise descriptio the Haunts and Habits of the Robin, we will quote GRAHAME's poetical and graphic lines—

"How simply unassuming is that strain!
It is the Redbreast's song, the friend of man.
High is his perch, but humble is his home,
And well concealed. Sometimes within the sound
Of heartsome mill-clack, where the spacious door
White-dusted, tells him, plenty reigns around,
Close at the root of brier-bush, that o'erhangs
The narrow stream, with shealings bedded white,
He fixes his abode, and lives at will.
Oft near some single cottage, he prefers
To rear his little home; there, pert and spruce,
He shares the refuse of the goodwife's churn,
Which kindly on the wall for him she leaves:
Below her lintel oft he lights, then in
He boldly flits, and fluttering loads his bill,
And to his young the yellow treasure bears.

Not seldom does he neighbour the low roof
Where tiny elves are taught: a pleasant spot
It is, well fenced from winter blast, and screened
By high o'er-spreading boughs, from summer sun.
Before the door a sloping green extends
No farther than the neighbouring cottage-hedge,
Beneath whose boutree shade a little well
Is scooped, so limpid, that its guardian trout
(The wonder of the lesser stooping wights)
Is at the bottom seen. At noontide hour,
The imprisoned throng, enlarged, blythsome rush forl
To sport the happy interval away;
While those from distance come, upon the sward,
At random seated, loose their little stores:
In midst of them poor Redbreast hops unharmed,
For they have read, or heard, and wept to hear,
The story of the Children in the Wood;
And many a crumb to Robin they will throw.
Others there are that love, on shady banks
Retired, to pass the summer days: their song,
Among the birchen boughs, with sweetest fall,
Is warbled, pausing, then resumed more sweet,
More sad; that, to an ear grown fanciful,
The babes, the wood, the man, rise in review,
And Robin still repeats the tragic line.

But should the note of flute, or human voice,
Sound through the grove, the madrigal at once
Ceases; the warbler flits from branch to branch,
And, stooping, sidelong turns his listening head."

Long as this extract is, we are strongly tempted to pass on from the leafy spring-time to the bare desolate winter, and continue the description of the Scottish poet—

"Of all the tuneful tribes, the Redbreast sole,
Confides himself to man; others sometimes
Are driven within our lintel-posts by storms,
And, fearfully, the sprinkled crumbs partake:
He feels himself at home. When lours the year,
He perches on the village turfy copes,
And, with his sweet but interrupted trills,
Bespeaks the pity of his future host.
But long he braves the season, ere he change
The heaven's grand canopy for man's low home;
Oft is he seen, when fleecy showers bespread
The house tops white, on the thawed smiddy roof.
Or in its open window he alights,
And, fearless of the clang, and furnace glare,
Looks round, arresting the uplifted arm,
While on the anvil cools the glowing bar.
But when the season roughens, and the drift
Flies upward, mingling with the falling flakes
In whirl confused, then on the cottage floor
He lights, and hops and flits, from place to place,
Restless at first, till, by degrees, he feels
He is in safety: Fearless then he sings
The winter day; and when the long dark night
Has drawn the rustic circle round the fire,
Waked by the dinsome wheel he trims his plumes,
And, on the distaff perched, chaunts soothingly
His summer song; or, fearlessly, lights down
Upon the basking sheep-dog's glossy fur;
Till, chance, the herd-boy, at his supper mess,
Attract his eye, then on the milky rim
Brisk he alights, and picks his little share."

Elsewhere GRAHAME addresses some musical lines to a Redbreast that flew in at his window, which, however, we must refrain from quoting, having much to

say about the bird which will, perhaps, prove more interesting to our readers. With regard to the place which naturalists have assigned to it, in their systematic arrangements of feathered creatures, we may observe that by Linnæus it is placed in the 6th order—*Passeres*, or Sparrows,—under the generic title of *Simplicirostres*, that is, having simple bills; the family name of the group, in which also is included the Nightingale, &c., being *Motacilla*, which name, however, LATHAM applies to the Wagtails, giving *Sylvia* to the warblers. It were a difficult, and after all, an uninteresting task, to trace our redbreasted friend through the varying systems of CUVIER, and PENNANT, and BRISSON, and others, amid the labyrinths of which he plays at hide and seek in a most provoking manner, bearing now this, and now that unaccountable, and almost unpronouncable name—a veritable off-shoot, no doubt, from a Greek or Latin root, but sadly puzzling to those who have not had the advantage of a classical education. Let us then take him up where MACGILLIVRAY leaves him, standing all alone in his glory, as far as British birds are concerned, the sole and undisputed owner of the pretty generic name *Erithacus*, to which, if we want to distinguish the species from its foreign congeners, we must add *Rubecula*. There, Robinet, what do you think of such a title? If that is not enough to make you too proud a bird to "sing to simple ears a simple lay," why, we know not what is. And now we have come to speak of your song, we may as well quote some curious remarks upon its variations, in accordance with the seasonal and atmospheric changes, from "Anecdotes of the Animal Kingdom."—

"Few observers of nature can have passed, unheeded, the sweetness and peculiarity the song of the Robin, and its various indications with regard to the atmospheric changes: the mellow liquid notes of Spring and Summer, the melancholy sweet pipings of Autumn, and the jerking chirps of Winter. In Spring, when about to change his winter song for the vernal, he warbles for a short time, in a strain so unusual, as at first to startle and puzzle even those ears most experienced in the notes of birds. He may be considered as part of the naturalist's barometer. On a Summer evening, though the weather may be in an unsettled and rainy state, he sometimes takes his stand on the topmost twig, or on the 'house top,' singing cheerfully and sweetly. When this is observed, it is an unerring promise of succeeding fine days. Sometimes though the atmosphere is dry and warm, he may be seen melancholy, chirping, and brooding in a bush, or low in a hedge: this promises the reverse of his merry lay and exalted station."

A Kentish poet, F. F. DALLY, has given this sometimes melancholy chirping of the bird, a funereal character—

"Though silent is the Nightingale,
The Robin here takes up the tale,
And unto ears that love to hear,
To hearts that fancy fairy things,
In plaintive prelude sweetly sings
The requiem of the dying year."

With WILLIAM HOWITT the bird is a musing monk, haunting the deserted cloisters of Wyckeham's college at Winchester: —

"A Robin Redbreast was the only musing monk that we found in these cloisters. He went with us all round, hopping from opening to opening, or perching on the bushes near us. 'Ay,' said the porter, 'that is the chapel Robin, it regularly attends service.' The Robin is a monk indeed."

Here is a picture by Mrs. ELLIS, which may well be taken for the death scene of the departing year, in which also the Robin figures as a mourner:—

"With wintry aspect had that day begun,
There was no wind, no rain, but yet no sun;
A dreamy silence slumbered all around,
And damp and dull the dews lay on the ground;
No movement stirred the air, save now and then
A leaf came flickering down upon the plain;
A lonely Robin from the leafless spray,
Tuned a sad song, then winged its flight away."

JAMES MONTGOMERY also speaks of—

"The song of the Redbreast with *ominous* note,
Foretelling the fall of the leaf."

Elsewhere the poet hails this note as the harbinger of Spring and liberty:—

"Soon shall spring in smiles and blushes
Steal upon the blooming year;
Then amid th' enamoured bushes,
Thy sweet song shall warble clear.
Then shall I too, joined with thee,
Swell the Hymn of Liberty."

By that close observer of nature, NEVILLE WOOD, we are told that—

"The song of the Robin is not very loud, but it is remarkable for its sweet, soft, and melancholy expression. In summer, as I have observed, it is little noticed, but in autumn it is peculiarly delightful, though I am certain of the truth of Selby's supposition, that the notes which are heard in autumn and winter, proceed from the throats of the young of the year. Nor do I ever remember to have heard the adult bird singing in its natural state, during the inclement seasons. But when confined to the house, or in a cage, both old and young will carol away right merrily. In softness and sweetness, I think the song of the Robin Redbreast is unexcelled by any of our other sylvan choristers, though as a whole it is surpassed by many. Witness, for instance—leaving the brake Nightingale, 'the leader of the vernal chorus,' out of the question,—the ethereal strains of the Garden Fauvet, the Blackcap, Fauvet, the Wood-Lark, and many others. But none of these, no, not even the Brake Nightingale itself, possesses that ineffably sweet expression, which we must pronounce to be peculiar to our admirable favorite."

Similar testimony to this is given by BECHSTEIN, and other naturalists. In a beautifully illustrated work on the Song Birds of Great Britain, privately printed, and edited by JOHN COTTON, F.Z.S., it is stated that the song of this bird is "sweet and well supported, and is continued almost throughout the year." Allusion is also there made to the various familiar and affectionate appellations by which it is known, as in Bornholm (Sweden) *Tommi-Liden;* in Norway, *Peter Ronsmed;* in Germany, *Thomas Gierdet;* in England, "*Bob,*" &c. WORDSWORTH also alludes to some of these titles of endearment, when addressing the Robin, he says—

"Art thou the bird whom man loves best,
The pious bird with the scarlet breast,
Our little English Robin;
The bird that comes about our doors
When autumn winds are sobbing?
Art thou the Peter of Norway boors?
Their Thomas in Finland,
And Russia far inland?
The bird who by some name or other
All men who know thee call thee brother?"

The nest of the Robin, we are told by MUDIE, a good authority on such matters, is "on the ground, at the roots of trees, and in other concealed places, formed of the same materials as the nest of the wren," that is, of almost any thing suitable which can be found near the spot, and lined with wool or hair; these materials, are very loosely put together, so that it is generally a rather bulky affair. "If, however," continues the above named naturalist, "there is not a natural concealment of foliage, the birds contrive to form an artificial one of dry leaves, under which they may reach

the nest without the precise spot being known; and when the dam leaves her eggs, she sometimes covers them in the same manner, so that the strewing of leaves mentioned in the old ballad of 'the Babes in the Wood,' is true to the habits of the Redbreast. The eggs are yellowish grey mottled with chesnut colour, and rarely exceed seven." MACGILLIVRAY describes them as "reddish-white, faintly freckled with light purplish red, nine and a half twelfths of an inch in length, seven and a fourth in breadth;" while BOLTON, in his truly beautiful and valuable work, entitled "Harmonia Ruralis," says that they are of a dull white, or cream color, marked with reddish brown spots, varying in number from five to nine." There is in reality, however, no discrepancy here, as the tints vary considerably in the eggs of different individuals. By the authority last named, we find it stated that—

"Young Redbreasts, when full feathered, may be easily mistaken for a different kind of bird, being spotted all over with rust-colored spots, on a light ground; the first appearance of the red is about the end of August, but the bird does not attain its full color till the end of the following month."

What its full color is all our readers must be aware, as its familiar habits give frequent opportunities of observing it; and this, not only in the wintry and inclement season, but also in the glad spring, and leafy summer time; for, as BISHOP MANT observes in his description of the month of April,—

"—— most of all to haunts of men,
Familiar though to savage glen,
And woodland wild he oft may roam
Secluded, oft his wintry home,
No less the Redbreast makes his bower
For nestling in the vernal hour,

In thatch or root of aged tree
Moss-grown, or arching cavity
Of bank or garden's refuse heap,
Or where the broad-leaved tendrils creep
Of ivy, and an arbour spread
O'er trellised porch or cottage shed."

Hitherto we have looked only on the bright side of Robinet's history; but it is now our duty as faithful chroniclers, to state the sad fact that he is, to his own feathered friends and kinsfolk, a most disagreeable, quarrelsome fellow; a very turk among the bushes, disturbing the sweet serenity of the sylvan scene, with his brawls and scuffles, and frequently, shocking to relate, staining the green sward, and the pure white blossoms with blood. Who that knows this, would—*could*, invoke him as the "gentle bird." Yes, Robinet! for the truth must be told, thou art a fierce pugnacious fellow, and, of a verity, dost not deserve the affection which is lavished on thee by those who see in thee a poor little harmless creature, driven by the inclemency of the weather, and the pangs of hunger, to seek shelter and food from man, and who doubtless think thee very grateful therefor, though even this may be doubted; for as soon as the ice-bound streams begin to flow once more, and the bare branches to put forth buds, thou art away into the woods, to seek the food which best thou lovest, and to build a home for thy expected progeny. Not that we would blame thee for thus obeying the promptings of nature, nor, indeed, for anything, save thy quarrelsome propensities: so never heed the ungracious truths which we have been telling of thee but believe us to be quite in earnest, while repeating the anecdote and verses in thy praise which follow.

The following paragraph, illustrative of the Robin's docility, and attachment to its friend and benefactor, man, is extracted from PERCY ST. JOHN'S "Birds."

"JOHN M'KELVIE, gardener to the lady of the late General Hughes, at her seat of Mount Charles, beautifully situated on the banks, and near the mouth of the classic Doon, has a host of winged companions, all of which come at his call, flutter around him in the garden, and feed from his hand. At the head of this feathered tribe stands a Redbreast, which all but speaks, in return for the long kind treatment it has experienced from its master. This bird, when called upon, will fly from the furthest point at which it can hear his voice, alight on his hand at once, and without any apprehensions, pick its meal, and oftentimes will sit on his shoulder, as he walks or works, and nestle in his bosom in well known security. Nay more, when the gardener goes to town, if the Robin by any chance espies him as he departs, it gives him an escort, chirping and fluttering along the hedge before him, until he reaches the toll-bar, at Alloway-place, on which, or on a neighbouring tree, it perches awaiting his return."

MRS. SCHOOLCRAFT, the wife of an English missionary, at Mackinaw, on Lake Huron, relates that—

"The North American Indians have a tradition that the Robin which with them is a considerably larger bird than with us, was once a youth whose father enjoined on him too long a fast (twelve days), on occasion of the customary abstinence from food before entering upon the duties of manhood, and choosing a guardian spirit, which must be something dreamt of during this fast. When the youth was upon the point of perishing with hunger, the transformation was effected, which saved him from such a doom: and the story goes on to tell how the father, who had been thus severe from a desire to make his son a great chief and warrior, went to the Lodge in which he was confined, on the morning after the proscribed time had expired, and how he saw the change take place, crying out the while in agony of spirit,—'My son! my son! do not leave me!' But the bird looked down on his father with pity beaming in his eyes, and told him he should always love to be near

man's dwellings; that he should always be seen happy and contented, by the constant sprightliness and joy he would display; that he would ever strive to cheer his father by his songs, which would be some consolation to him for the loss of the glory he expected—and that although no longer a man, he would ever be the harbinger of peace and joy to the human race."

This tradition is beautifully expressive of the universal feeling of affectionate regard for the Robin, which seems to prevail wherever the bird is known; it appears to be looked upon as as a kind of connecting link between humanity, and the feathered creation and it is a creature so intimately associated with the recollections of *home* and *childhood*, and all that is brightest, and freshest, and purest, in the heart and imagination of man, that we need feel no surprise at the number of poetic tributes which the bird has received from the sensitive and the gifted sons of genius.

In conclusion, we would endeavour to express our own sentiments, in relation to this universal favorite, in lines, which if they have no other merit, possess at least those of earnestness and sincerity.

STANZAS TO THE ROBIN.

"The Lark has ceased his merry trill, the Nightingale is mute,
The Blackbird poureth out no more his notes, so like a flute;
No longer on the bending spray sings sweet the speckled Thrush,
The Linnet's silent in the copse, the Redstart in the bush:

The trees stand bare and verdureless, all swaying to the blast,
And from the leaden sky come down the hailstones thick and fast;
No flower is seen upon the banks, but patches white instead,
Where whirling snow-wreaths cover o'er the leaves all sere and dead.

A mournful silence reigns around, no cheerful sound is heard,
No hum of insect on the wing, no note of warbling bird,
No low of cattle on the hills, no bleat of pastured sheep;
All objects wear a sombre hue, all creatures seem to weep;—

Nay! hear ye not that warble low? again it meets the ear,
Like a consolatory voice the mourning soul to cheer:
It is the Robin, who, when all our summer friends are gone,
Because he beareth love to man, still singeth gaily on.

Oh, gentle Bird! with ruddy breast, and quick and restless eye,
That flyeth not our presence when the stormy days are nigh,
But makest music in our homes, and cheerest us with song
Throughout the winter desolate, so dreary and so long;

I love thee well, for all that thou hast done for us and ours,
Aye! better than the soaring Lark, or Linnet in the bowers;
And better than the Nightingale, though sweet her song to me,
Or e'en those children of the sun, the butterfly and bee!

Didst thou not cover o'er with leaves, those babes so fair and young
That died within the gloomy woods? and it was thou who sung
The requiem for their sinless souls, now looking from above,
To bless thee for thy tenderness, and never tiring love.

Hast thou not ever proved thyself to man a friend indeed,
By solacing his saddest hours, and helping him in need?
For he is cheered and strenghtened, when he listens to thy voice,
He owns a watchful Providence, and doth therein rejoice.

He knows the clouds will pass away, and brighter days will come,
Thou art than him more destitute, no food hast thou, no home,
Thy sylvan haunts no more can give a shelter to thy head,
And all thy spring and summers friend, the lovely flowers, are dead

Yet cheerfully thou singest on, one heedful eye doth see,
One arm doth minister unto the wants alike of man, and thee?
And for these teachings holy, and thy friendship for mankind,
Affection's links unto my heart shall thee for ever bind.

THE CHAFFINCH

A low sweet warble, and a gentle trill:
A sharp *fink, fink* aye, 'tis the Chaffinch near,
While yet the whistling winds blow keen and shrill,
He with a song salutes the opening year.

THE CHAFFINCH.

Cælebs, *Linnæus*, *Temminck*, and *Macgillivray*. Le Pinson commun, *Buffon*. Der Gemeine oder Buckfink, *Bechstein*.

List, to the merry *Shilfa!* on the air,
It sweetly trills a morning song of praise,
And flits from bough to bough, now here, now there,
Nor long in any spot, or posture stays;
A lively bird, that in the early days
When only fitful gleams of sunshine break
Athwart the leaden gloom, and misty haze,
That veil the infant year, will frequent make
The leafless woods re-echo to its call;
Treef, treef! a low sweet note, and then a shrill,
And sharp *fink, fink!* upon the ear doth fall,
Like speech expressive of a sentient will:
As brisk, as merry, and as loved a bird,
As any in the fields and woodlands heard.

H. G. Adams.

HERE appears to be but little difference of opinion among ornithologists and bird fanciers as to the attractive qualities of the little ıch, which has been variously called the Pink, Twink, Shilfa, Shelly, Shell-apple, Chaffy, , and Beech-Finch, terms expressive of its brisk ıabits, its shrill notes, or of some other charac-ːs of its nature. All agree in assigning to it a lace in human estimation, and yet it is not a ıt songster, nor a bird of particularly rich plu-nor of such light and exquisite proportion of ıs many others. It is pretty and graceful, no and has a cheerful, *trilling* song of its own, does not excel in any of those qualities which

are generally considered necessary, to render a bird a prime and universal feathered favorite. And yet it is, as we said before, generally held in high estimation. How is this? Fair maiden, a word in your ear; it is always lively, always agreeable; with a song for every place, and every ear, and almost every season; always busy, and industrious, and *useful*. No February sky so black and frowning; no March wind so shrill and piercing; no April shower so sudden and drenching; but the little Shilfa—a Scottish term, we believe, but we use it because it has a soft and pleasant sound—may be heard chanting away right merrily, at oft-repeated intervals, in his own peculiar way, as though he would say,—

"Who so happy, so happy as I?"

Then it is, that the soft call-note to his mate, *treef, treef!* is most frequently heard—his mate from whom he has been separated during the long bleak winter, living that dull and solitary life, which has gained for him the name *Cælebs*, the bachelor. And in the leafy summer time, when the zephyrs are so laden with sweet odors, that they seem ready to faint and die quite away, leaving no breath to fan and cool the sultry atmosphere, often when other birds are mute and motionless, hiding within the shadow of the world of greenery, too and fro is seen flitting the busy little *Shilfa;* and his sharp *fink, fink!* seems to pierce the dull lethargy which is fast settling over all nature, and to arouse the soul to activity, and hope, and enterprise. Then, again, when the autumn winds are piping loud, and the withered leaves are whirled and heaped in the hollows of the hills, over which there seems to

come a sound of lamentation for the bloom and beauty passed away, still it is the merry little *Shilfa* that flits about from hedge to hedge, and utters his rallying note, *yack, yack!* calling on his companions to prepare for a flight to some spot, where food is more plentiful, and the wind less cold and boisterous:—

Oh, why should we repine and fret,
And lose ourselves in vain regret,
Because the hopes that once we cherished,
Like fragrant summer flowers have perished?
Why, when the skies are overcast,
Still turn our faces to the past,
And weep for days when all above
Was bright as is the dawn of love,
And all beneath was fresh and fair,
As youth unvisited by care?
Better it is to turn our eyes
Upon the path before which lies,
However dark the scene appear,
And, like the Shilfa, void of fear,
With hopeful energy prepare
The coming toil and strife to dare.

"RUSTICUS," in his charming "Letters from Godalming," says,—

"The Chaffinch, or Pink, as he is often called, is a prime favorite of mine, and though he is certainly guilty of some indiscretion in pulling up young radishes and leaving their white stalks strewed on the ground, yet that were a hard-hearted gardener who would not forgive him this failing in consideration of the good service he afterwards performs, when the apple and pear leaves are woven together by the grubs of a little worthless moth, and so smothered and choked, that the crop is sure to fail, if there are neither Pinks nor Titmice to abate the nuisance. It is then that the Pink appears in his most amiable character: it is then that his bride is sitting on her pattern of a nest, the neatest and most compact of all nests; and he spends all his time in routing out the grubs from the web-joined leaves, and bearing them to his lady love, or perhaps to the nestlings who have just burst the shell, and are yet too tender to

be abandoned by their mother. The saucy Bluecap himself is not more expert in this grub-hunting, nor can he cheer us, as does the Pink, with a sweet and merry song. I must, however, confess, that the same song, cheerful and merry, and sweet though it be, often comes too soon, long, long before the sun has power to warm us, and then sounds rather tantalizing,—the semblance without the reality of spring."

Here we see the bird exhibited in its most *useful* and amiable character, as the friend of the husbandman and the gardener, by whom it is often condemned and shot without mercy, although those who have watched its habits most narrowly, agree in absolving it from the heavy charge on which the plea for its destruction rests. Listen to what MUDIE says on this head.

"Chaffinches prefer insects and their larva, as long as these are to be found, and they do great service in the destruction of them, not only while they have young, but after these are fledged, and have come about the gardens; not to it till they have cleared the insects from the plants, that they begin to eat seeds; and soon after they betake themselves to these, they also betake themselves to the fields, and pick up those seeds that are better taken than left."

And WATERTON, too, gives his testimony to the usefulness of the bird, and reminds his persecutors of the unappreciated service which he renders to man:—

"If his little pilferings in the beds of early radishes alarm you for the return of the kitchen garden, think, I pray you, how many thousands of seeds he consumes, which otherwise would be carried by the wind into your choicest quarters of cultivation, and would spring up there most sadly to your cost. Think again of his continual service at your barn door, where he lives throughout the winter, chiefly on the unprofitable seeds which would cause you endless trouble were they allowed to be in the straw, and to be carried out into the land, on the approach of spring."

We might also quote WOOD and other naturalists in defence of our little plunderer, for such to a certain extent he undoubtedly is, making at times sad havoc on the flower borders, and among the beds of young turnips and radishes, which he very dexterously draws up as soon as they appear above the surface of the soil; but then it should be remembered that the food which he thus takes, which is pleasing or beneficial to man, bears but a small proportion to the noxious seeds and insects destroyed by him: and surely it is but a slight payment, if it were only for his pleasant song, and lively and agreeable manners.

"When the Chaffinch rests its wing,
'Mid the budding trees so gay;
Still anon it loves to sing,
Merrily, its roundelay.
Lo, on yonder branchlet hoar,
Twined with honeysuckle round,
Curiously bestudded o'er
Lurks a nest by ivy crowned:"

sings an anonymous poet, quoted by NEVILLE WOOD, who gives this description of the skilful little architect's dwelling, during the season of incubation.

"The nest of the Chaffinch is a most beautiful and elegant structure, and not inferior in appearance to the undomed architecture of any British bird. The exterior consists of moss and wool, spangled over with lichens, which give it a gay and elegant aspect. It is little liable to deviation as regards materials, though the look of the whole varies considerably, and scarcely any two specimens agree precisely. The kind of locality selected for nidification of course exercises considerable influence over the composition of the structure, but as much, or even more, appears to depend on the skill and age of the architects. The beautiful and compact form is one of its principal characteristics, and is always observed in a

greater or less degree. Those framed by yearling birds are somewhat looser and larger than those of adults, and those built in an unfavorable locality as regards materials, are usually unexceptionable in shape, but deficient in the materials which form the chief ornaments of the structure. The interior is lined with horse and cow hair, 'felted' in with a little wool, rabbit's fur, or other warm and soft substance."

In BOLTON'S "Harmonia Ruralis," we find a beautiful representation of a Chaffinch's nest surrounded by the prickly leaves, and ornamented with the coral berries, of the holly, reminding us of BISHOP MANT'S lines,—

> "Here on the lawn in laurustine,
> Or holly, see the Chaffinch twine
> With hair and moss, his home compact."

And also of the description, given by a correspondent of the "Field Naturalist's Magazine," who relates that a pair of Chaffinches built in a shrub so near his sitting room window, as to allow him to be a close observer of their operations.—

"The foundation of their nest was laid on the twelfth of April; the female only worked at the nest-making, and by unwearied diligence, the beautiful structure was finished in three weeks; the first egg was deposited on the second of May, four others were subsequently added, and the whole five were hatched on the fifteenth. During the time of incubation, neither curiosity nor constant observation from the open window disturbed the parent bird; she sat most patiently; the male bird often visited his partner, but it was not discovered whether he ever brought her food."

YARRELL, who quotes this, remarks, as the result of his own observation, that—

"The Finches, generally, are remarkable for the neatness and beauty of the nests they construct, and the Chaffinch is no exception to the rule. The outside of their nest is composed of moss, studded

with white or green lichens, as may best accord with the situation in which it is built; the inside is lined with wool, and this again is covered with hair and some feathers. The eggs are usually four or five in number, of a purplish brown. The place chosen is variable; sometimes it is fixed in the fork of a bush, in a hedge row, or a wall fruit tree, frequently in an apple or pear tree, several feet above the ground."

BOLTON says that the eggs are of a blueish-white, splashed and spotted with purple, while MACGILLIVRAY describes them as purplish-white, or pale reddish grey, sparsely spotted with reddish brown, and having a few irregular lines of the same; nine-twelfths of an inch long, and six-and-a-half-twelfths broad. The first named of these authorities also states, that among other materials for lining its nest, the bird sometimes uses the web of the spider, and this we have seen stated elsewhere.

A singular instance is on record of a Chaffinch having built its nest in a block of the mast of a small vessel lying at Greenock; the vessel, afterwards put to sea, and thus the strength of parental affection in the poor birds was severely tried; and well it stood the trial, as Cowper has related, whose lines we quote: —

"Within the cavity aloft
Their roofless home they fixed,
Formed with materials neat and soft,
Bents, wool, and feathers mixt.

Four ivory eggs soon pave its floor,
With russet specks bedight—
The vessel weighs, forsakes the shore,
And lessens to the sight.

The mother bird is gone to sea,
As she had changed her kind;
But goes the male?—far wiser, he
Is doubtless left behind.

No—soon as from ashore he saw
The winged mansion move,
He flew to reach it, by a law
Of never-failing love;

Then, perching at his consort's side,
Was briskly borne along;
The billows and the blast defied,
And cheered her with a song."

MACGILLIVRAY places the Chaffinch, and the Mountain Finch, or Brambling (*Fringilla Montifringilla*), in a genus by themselves, and includes them in the family *Passerinæ;* he describes the bird as a permanent resident in all the wooded and cultivated parts of this country, and even in the bleakest parts of the north of Scotland, although in corresponding latitudes on the continent, it appears that many individuals imigrate southward: respecting this partial imigration of the birds, and the separation of the sexes, many observations have been made by various naturalists. LINNÆUS, in his "Fauna of Sweden," says that the female Chaffinches imigrate from that country in the winter, but that the males do not, and he bestowed upon the species the name of *Cælebs*, the bachelor, in reference to this circumstance. According to SELBY,—

"In Northumberland and Scotland this separation takes place in the month of November, and from that period till the return of spring, few females are to be seen, and those few always in distinct societies. The males remain, and are met with during the winter in immense flocks, feeding with the other granivorous birds in the stubble lands, as long as the weather continues mild, and the ground free from snow; resorting, upon the approach of storm, to the farm yards, and other places of refuge and supply. It has been noticed by several authors, that the arrival of the males in a number of our summer visitants, precedes that of the females by many days;—a

fact from which we might infer, that in such species, a similar separation exists between the sexes before their migration."

GILBERT WHITE expresses his surprise that the vast flocks of Chaffinches which he has observed towards Christmas in the fields about Selborne, appeared, when narrowly watched, to consist almost entirely of females. BLYTH, while admitting that he has "once or twice met with flocks of white-winged Spinks, or Chaffinches, consisting entirely of hens, in Kent and Surrey," which he suspects were from the north, yet he believes that such flocks are of comparatively rare occurrence, and form the exception rather than the rule, and that there are many birds of this species of both sexes, which remain throughout the winter, and do not flock even in Scotland. KNAPP says—"With us (that is in Devonshire) the sexes do not separate at any period of the year, the flocks frequenting our barn doors and homesteads in winter being composed of both." While YARRELL, after stating that "We certainly receive a considerable accession to our numbers at the great autumnal migration, most probably from Sweden and Norway," continues—"I have, however, reason to believe that some of the large flocks of supposed females only, are in reality old females accompanied by their young birds of that year, which in plumage resemble females, the young males not having at that time acquired that brilliancy of colors which renders them so conspicuous afterwards when adults." So that the separation of the sexes, which has been observed to take place in some instances, can scarcely be considered as an unvarying habit or characteristic of the bird, and our spruce *Cœlebs* does not always, even during that

gloomy period of the year, when he is said to separate from his mate, lead a bachelor life, the real gaiety of which we are greatly disposed to question, although "gay as a bachelor" is a proverbial saying of some repute. Perhaps it is this popular fallacy, in connection with the assumed partially solitary life of the bird, which has given rise to the saying—"as gay as a Chaffinch," which is prevalent in France, in which country this appears to be one of the most common and highly prized of cage birds. It is among the German bird fanciers, however, that the breeding and training of this pretty songster occupies the greatest share of attention, and to BECHSTEIN, therefore, a reference must be made by all who would be fully informed thereupon. He says with regard to its *Habitat*, that—

> The common Chaffinch is found throughout Europe, and is abundant in Germany, and inhabits all kinds of woods, coppices, and gardens. They are migratory birds, though some winter with us. The passage continues in autumn from the commencement of October to the middle of November, and also in the spring throughout the whole of March. They migrate in large flocks. In the spring the males arrive a short time before the females. Our bird catchers are well aware of this fact, and when the males have passed, they no longer continue their sport. In the forest of Thuringia the fancy for these birds is so universal, that throughout the entire district scarcely a Chaffinch is heard with a good song, so much are they pursued."

Of this song our author states himself to be a great admirer, and says, that "as he always has about him a large number of birds with the best songs, it would not be difficult for him to fill several sheets with observations upon the music of the Chaffinch." He then proceeds to arrange "in a certain definite order," the various distinct strains, as many as twelve, into which

this music has been divided by the Thuringian trainers, each strain being named, as it is said, after the terminal syllable of the last strophe, so closely are the notes of the birds supposed to assimilate to the articulations of the human voice. SHUCKARD relates that the inhabitants of Ruhl, a factory village in the forest of Thuringia, are such great fanciers of Chaffinches, that they have been known to go from thence to the Hartz, a distance of sixteen German miles, to catch a good bird, and that one of those knife-smiths, in the enthusiasm of his admiration for what is called a good beater (a bird that could keep time well), has given a cow in exchange for it, and hence has arisen a proverb not unfrequently heard in the forest villages—"*this Chaffinch is worth a cow.*"

It is sad to reflect that most creatures on which man sets a high value—the possession of which becomes an object of strong desire with him, are subjected to cruel suffering; art is called in to improve, as it is thought, the natural gifts of that creature, whose instincts and habits are but little regarded, if they stand in the way, as they commonly do, of the selfish gratification of its possessor. Thus it is with the Chaffinch: those who profess themselves to be most enthusiastic admirers of its song, frequently subject the bird to an operation of the most barbarous cruelty—searing out its eyes with a red hot iron, in order to prolong the period, and to heighten the effect, of its melody. WATERTON, in one of his essays, has the following remarks upon this inhuman practice, which do honor alike to his feeling and judgment:—

"Poor Chaffinches, poor choristers, poor little sufferers! My

heart aches as I pass along the streets and listen to your plaintive notes. At all hours of the day we may hear these hapless captives singing (as far as we can judge) in apparent ecstacy. I would fain hope that these prisoners, so woe-begone, and so steeped in sorrow, to the eye of him who knows their sad story, may have no recollection of those days when they poured forth their wild notes in the woods free as air, the happiest of the happy! Did they remember the hour when the hand of man so cruelly deprived them both of liberty and eyesight, we should say that they would pine in anguish, and sink down at last, a certain prey to grief and melancholy. At Aix-la-Chapelle may be seen a dozen or fourteen of these blind songsters hung out in cages at a public-house, not far from the Cathedral. They sing incessantly, for months after those at liberty have ceased to warble; and they seem to vie with each other which can carol in the loudest strain. There is something in song so closely connected with the overflowings of a joyous heart, that when we hear it we immediately fancy we can see both mirth and pleasure joining in the party. Would, indeed, that both of these were the constant attendants on this much-to-be-pitied group of captive choristers. How the song of birds is involved in mystery! mystery probably never to be explained. Whilst sauntering up and down the Continent in the blooming month of May, we hear the frequent warbling of the Chaffinch; and then we fancy that he is singing solely to beguile the incubation of his female, sitting on her nest in a bush close at hand. But on returning to the town we notice another little Chaffinch, often in some wretched alley, a prisoner with the loss of both its eyes, and singing nevertheless as though its little throat would burst. Does this blind captive pour forth its melody to soothe its sorrows? Has Omnipotence kindly endowed the Chaffinch with vocal faculties which at one time may be employed to support it in distress, and at another to add to its social enjoyments? What answer shall we make? We know not what to say. But be it as it will, I would not put out the eyes of the poor Chaffinch, though by doing so I might render its melody ten times sweeter than that of the sweet nightingale itself. Oh, that the potentate in whose dominions this little bird is doomed to such a cruel fate, would pass an edict to forbid the perpetration of the barbarous deed! Then would I exclaim, 'O king of men! thy act

y of a royal heart. That kind Being who is a friend to the
s shall recompense thee for this!' "

he plumage of the Chaffinch there is neither
:e blending of tints, nor those beautiful contrasts
ve observe in that of many other birds; yet is
neral effect very pleasing to the eye. MANT
of

"The Chaffinch with bright bars of white
Crossing his wings of velvet black;"

re, certainly, we have a good contrast; but it is
en that the white is so clear, and the black so
id "velvety," as to afford it; still it is a very
bird, and our wonder is that its elegant appear-
ts pleasing manners, and agreeable song, have
led forth more tributes from the poet-lovers of
history: the one just quoted dismisses it in a
w lines; these which follow, being all that we
ot already given.—

"The Chaffinch's unchanging '*twink*,'
From beechen bough, or *chink, chink, chink*."

may be said, is rhyme, but not poetry; true,
nuch that the good bishop has written in his
ih Months,' which we admire principally as faith-
tures of nature. Let GRAHAME now give us
his little bits of description, which, although
yme, are truly poetical:—

"At such a still and sultry hour as this,
When not a strain is heard through all the woods,
I've seen the SHILFA light from off his perch,
And hop into a shallow of the stream,
Then, half afraid, flit to the shore, then in
Again alight, and dip his rosy breast
And fluttering wings, while dewlike globules coursed

The plumage of his brown-empurpled back.
The barefoot boy, who, on some slaty stone,
Almost too hot for touch, has watching stood,
Now thinks the well-drenched prize his own,
And rushes forward;—quick, though wet, the wing
Gains the first branches of some neighbouring tree,
And baulks the upward gazing hopeless eye.
The ruffling plumes are shook, the pens are trimmed,
And full and clear the sprightly ditty rings,
Cheering the brooding dam: she sits concealed
Within the nest deep-hollowed, well disguised
With lichens grey, and mosses gradual blent,
As if it were a knurle in the bough."

Chaffinches, like most other birds, vary considerably in appearance, in accordance with the difference of age, sex, and season, &c. The sexes closely resemble each other until the spring moult, after which the males acquire the red, blue, and grey tints which distinguish them from the more sober coloured females. It is not, however, until the spring of the second year, that their plumage attains its full brilliancy of hue, and then a great difference may often be observed between two birds of the same age and sex. As the second season advances, these tints become more and more distinct and beautiful; then they begin to fade, and by the end of autumn, the head and breast become dull and pale, in which state they remain until the next spring. There are also varieties of the bird distinguished by particularly marked plumage. BECHSTEIN mentions two, White Ringfinches, with a white ring round the neck; and Spotted Finches.

Although a lively bird, the Chaffinch, as WOOD well remarks, "has nothing pert, vulgar, or sparrow-like in its manners; it never twitches up its tail in the singular mode that the House Sparrow is observed to do, and

sometimes sits for half an hour together on the anch of a tree, behind which, if slopen, it frequently deavors to conceal itself when noticed, remaining nost motionless. It, however, keeps a vigilant look- t, constantly turning about its little head, with a isk and rapid motion." The following anecdote by s author, will afford a fitting though melancholy nclusion to our chapter on this interesting bird:—

' In a large ivy-clad tree in a garden behind a house belonging t friend of mine, was found the nest of a Chaffinch; I was in habit of repairing to this little domicile every day, but after ut a week discontinued my visits. One day I went out shooting h my friend, and seeing a bird on a tree, just within gun-shot, t at it; it was a female Chaffinch; nothing was thought of this, we walked on. A few days afterwards I was informed that the e Chaffinch had been found dead in the nest in the ivy tree. At I was considerably surprised at this occurrence; but recollect- that the female had been shot within fifty yards of the nest, it a struck me that we must have killed the female that was sitting he ivy tree; that her mate had waited on the nest, and, finding t she never returned, pined to death. The parent was perfectly and dry, and had four young birds under its outstretched wings. friend had this curiosity preserved in the position we found it, I believe it still remains in his possession."

In a former chapter, under the head of Goldfinch, gave an enumeration of the various individuals of Finch family, among which we mentioned the WFINCH *(Fringilla Cocothraustes)*; as we find among papers some lines addressed to this bird, we include m here, with a few introductory remarks. It is largest bird of the genus that appears in the British lands; and it has hitherto been observed only in the uthern parts of the country. Its nest is generally

found in the close foliage of a bush or tree five or si feet from the ground; sometimes in the thick top of pine or other evergreen. The eggs are of a greenis white mottled with grey and brown, the prevailin colors of the bird itself, whose note, when it doe sing, which is seldom, is soft and inward, somethin like that of the Bullfinch:—

Oh, gentle Finch! that lovest in retired spots to dwell,
And singest, with an inward voice, thy sweet songs morn and eve,
Thou'rt like a cloistered eremite, or nun within her cell,
That never, for the busy world, that solitude would leave—
Whose life is as a quiet stream, that glideth soft along,
And murmurs to the leafy boughs, that shield it from the sun,
And to the lovely flow'rs, that bloom its verdant banks among,
Of peace, and praise, and thankfulness, until its race be run.

The stillness of the leafy wood—the silence and the calm
Prevailing in the solitude, are pleasant unto thee;
Thou cherishest no evil thought, thou dreamest not of harm,
And therefore is thy bosom from all care and sorrow free;
The same boughs rustle over thee, the same stream glideth by,
With silver voice, that to thy song responses uttereth,—
And where thine eyes first opened, to that patch of azure sky,
That looketh like an angel-face, thou closest them in death.

"Man hath a weary pilgrimage," the poet well hath said,
He may not lead like thee, sweet bird, a peaceful happy life;
In whatsoever path the Lord may choose, his feet must tread,
And this, alas! too oft is one of trouble and of strife;
Yet should he not repine thereat, nor envy thee thy lot,
Hereafter his reward will come; thou diest, and for aye,
For him there is a future life, where sorrow cometh not,
If here he strives to walk aright, and do as best he may.

THE THRUSH.

No feathered songster hath a note more loud,
More richly varied, than the speckled Thrush:
That singeth when grey shades the landscape shroud,
And when the morning breaks with rosy flush.

THE THRUSH.

Turdus Musicus, *Linnæus*, *Temminck*, and *Macgillivray*. Le Grive, *Buffon*. Die Singdrossel, *Bechstein*.

A flute-like melody is thine, O Thrush!
Full of rich cadences, and clear and deep;
Upon the sense it cometh like a gush
Of perfume, stolen from the winds that sweep
Where spice-isles gem the bosom of the deep;
At early morn, and 'mid the eve-tide's hush,
Pouring thy mellow music thou dost keep,
From out the lilac tree or hawthorn bush:
I love thee for the love thou bear'st the lowly,
The cottage garden is thy fav'rite haunt,
And in those hours, so calm, so pure, so holy,
It ever is thy pleasure forth to chant
Those blithesome pœans, seeming as it were
Thy wish to make all happy, dwelling there.

H. G. Adams.

NO British songster pours out a more loud, clear, and melodious strain, than the Song Thrush, Throstle, or Mavis, as this bird is variously called: the notes of the Nightingale are no doubt softer, richer, and more varied; those of the Blackbird are more mellow and full of tone; the lay of the Finch is more sprightly; and that of the Skylark more thrilling and exhilirating; but whether in its greenwood home, or in a state of captivity, no feathered chorister of them all so pleases the ear which delights in sweet sounds, and *satisfies*, as it were, the soul of the listener, as this speckled songster of the groves and gardens. GRAHAM, in a few characteristic lines

has very happily described both the appearance and song of the bird—

> "The Thrush's song
> Is varied as his plumes; and as his plumes
> Blend beauteous, each with each, so run his notes
> Smoothly, with many a happy rise and fall.
> How prettily, upon his parded breast,
> The vividly contrasting tints unite
> To please the admiring eye; so, loud and soft,
> And high and low, all in his notes combine,
> In alternation sweet, to charm the ear."

And as it is with the plumage of the bird, in which the tints, although sufficiently diverse, are yet nicely shaded, and blended one into the other; so is it with the song, which flows on like a stream of liquid music, having in it enough of variation to give it life and character, and yet presenting none of those sudden transitions and quick changes of tone and expression, which startle and please for the moment, but too much excite and stimulate the mind and senses, to be permanently agreeable or healthful. To us the song of the Thrush has ever seemed like the voice of a dear friend, cheering, advising, and, at times, admonishing us of our duties, and reproving us for our errors; we should never weary of listening to it, for it flows on so sweetly and agreeably: it has none of those long-continued reiterations of a single note or more, which so mar the harmony of many a dulcet strain; none of those trills, and shakes, and quavers, which seem the very madness of song, and make one hold one's breath, fearing lest the musician, as Strada's Nightingale is said to have done, were singing itself to death—and then, again, it has none of those long pauses and intervals of silence, when the delighted sense listens in vain

for a repetition of the thrilling harmony, and the conviction comes like a chill to the bosom, that it, like all earthly pleasures, is but transitory and unsatisfying. Well it is for us, if we can look through the mists and fogs that surround humanity, to the place of everlasting joy and pleasure, full and unfailing; well for us if we can be as unrepining and as trustful as the Thrush—

> "Of true felicity possest
> He glides through life supremely blest,
> And for his daily meal relies
> On Him whose love the world supplies;
> Rejoiced he finds his morning fare,
> His dinner lies he knows not where,
> Still to the unfailing hand he chants,
> His grateful song, and never wants."

As an anonymous poet sings. Throughout the length of the longest summer-day, in woodland, field, and garden, may the sweet song of the Thrush be heard. The old pastoral poet, WILLIAM BROWNE, when he went forth in the morning, *knew* that it was *very* early—

> "For the Throstle had not been,
> Gathering worms yet on the green."

DRAYTON, in his "Polyolbion," tells us how, amid the grey twilight of morn, he heard—

> "The Throstle with shrill sharps, as purposely he sung,
> To awake the lustless sun, or chiding that so long
> He was in coming forth, that should the thickets thrill."

While BURNS, when he describes the scenes and circumstances of declining day, among the Scottish glens and mountains, makes the song of the Mavis a prominent feature thereof—

> "'Twas even—the dewy fields were green,
> On every blade the pearls hang,

The zephyr wanton'd round the bean,
And bore its fragrant sweets alang:
In every glen the Mavis sang,
All nature listening seemed the while,
Except where greenwood echoes rang,
Among the braes o' Ballochmyle."

Elsewhere he also alludes to the bird as an evening songster, apportioning out the day between three of the best known, and most admired, of the tuneful quire:—

"The Lav'rock wakes the merry morn,
Aloft on dewy wing;
The Merle, in the noontide bower
Makes woodland echoes ring;
The Mavis wild wi' many a note,
Sings drowsy day to rest:
In love and freedom they rejoice,
Wi' care nor thrall opprest."

Again, in another place, this poet bids the shepherds—

"Hark the Mavis' *evening* sang,
Sounding Clouden's woods amang."

Nor should we omit to quote the nice distinction which he makes between the song of the Thrush, and that of the Merle and the Linnet:—

"The Blackbird *strong*, the Lintwhite *clear*,
The Mavis *mild* and *mellow*."

Fitting music this for the close of a fresh spring or balmy summer's day—"mild and mellow," soft and soothing; speaking to the soul, through the ear, of—

"Something *attempted*, something *done*,
To earn a night's repose,"

and ushering in the period of silence and of tranquility. The Germans have very happily expressed this impression in a cradle song, one verse of which runs thus:—

"Sweet child, while not a breath around,
Disturbs thy slumbers soft and sound,
Save when the Thrush, that hovers nigh,
Sends from the hedge sweet lullaby."

And now we have got to the old "Fatherland," we may as well quote what BECHSTEIN says about the commendatory qualities of the Thrush: —

"It is one of the few birds whose clear and beautiful song animates the woods, and makes them pleasing. From the summits of the highest trees, it announces by its varying song, like that of the Nightingale, the approach of spring, and sings throughout the whole summer, especially in the morning dawn and evening twilight. For the sake of this song it is kept by fanciers in a cage, whence morning and evening, even as early as February, it will delight a whole street with its loud and pleasing song, when hung outside of the window, or inside, so that the window be a little open. In Thuringia it is reported to articulate words. Its strophe was formerly heard more frequently than it is now. Only old and excellent birds still sing it. This Thrush will live for six or eight years if its food be varied."

Touching the nature of this food, our author gives full directions, in his admirable work on Cage Birds, of which several English editions have been published. Our volume is rather a companion for the fields and woods, than for the aviary, and therefore we have said little about the proper mode of treating birds in a state of confinement, in which state our readers will ere this have learned, we love not to see or to think of them. It is in their own sylvan homes that we would visit our feathered favorites, to their natural song that we would listen, and in noticing their natural habits and manners, that we take especial delight. Like the convalescent knight in SPENSER'S "Faerie Queene," of whom it is said,—

"Now when as Calepine was waxen strong,
Upon a day he cast abroad to wend,
To take the air, and hear the Thrush's song."

So we, beneath the canopy of leafy boughs, through which the sunshine shimmers, and amid which the gentle breezes ever whisper, or under the broad blue cope of heaven, would rather listen to the simplest strain that ever feathered warbler uttered, than to the most wonderful performance of a little captive, whose "native wood notes wild," had been improved upon, as it is called, by artificial teaching, and one knows not what amount of suffering and privation.

But we were speaking of the food of the Thrush, which, in its wild state of nature, appears to consist principally of earth-worms, slugs, snails, and the like soft animal substances, that is in the earlier part of the year, for in the autumn, they feed much upon berries, such as those of the holly, ivy, mountain-ash, and juniper: to the mulberry, as well as to the cherry tree, and gooseberry and currant bushes, they are also occasional visitors, nor do they object to make a meal now and then off a nice ripe, juicy pear. But these slight depredations on fruits set apart especially for the use of man, may well be forgiven, in consideration of the services rendered in the destruction of immense numbers of caterpillars, and other garden pests, to one kind of which in particular the Thrush is a great enemy: here is KNAPP'S account of his method and perseverance in the work of destruction:—

"I do not recollect any creature less obnoxious to harm than the common snail (*helix aspersa*) of our gardens. A sad persevering depredator and mangler it is; and when we catch it at its banquet

on our walls, it can expect no reprieve at our hands. But our captures are partial and temporary; and, secure in its strong shell, it seems safe from external dangers; yet its time comes, and one weak bird destroys it in great numbers. In the winter season, the common Song Thrush feeds sparingly upon the berries of the white-thorn, and the hedge fruits, but passes a great portion of its time at the bottom of ditches, seeking for the smaller species of snails, (*helix hortensis* and *helix nemoralis*), which it draws out from the old stumps of the fence with unwearied perseverance, dashing their shells to pieces on a stone; and we frequently see it escaping from the hedge-bank with its prize, which no little intimidation induces it to relinquish. The larger kind at this season are beyond its power readily to obtain; for, as the cold weather advances, they congregate in clusters behind some old tree, or against a sheltered wall, fixing the opening of their shells against each other, or on the substance beneath; and adhering so firmly in a mass, that the Thrush cannot by any means draw them, wholly or singly, from their asylum. In the warmer portion of the year they rest separate, adhere but slightly; and should the summer be a dry one, the bird makes ample amends for the disappointment in winter; intrudes its bill under the margin of the opening, detaches them from their hold, and destroys them in great numbers. In the summers of 1825 and 1826, both hot and dry ones, necessity rendered the Thrush unusually assiduous in its pursuits; and every large stone in the lane, or under the old hedge, was strewed with the fragments of its banquet. This has more than once reminded me of the fable of the 'Four Bulls;' united invincible,—when separated, an easy prey; but, with the exception of this season, and this bird, I know no casualty to which the garden snail is exposed."

The Thrush is one of the few song birds that are vocal at a very early part of the year; according to a Calendar of Nature, kept by GILBERT WHITE, from the 6th to the 22nd January, is generally the date of its commencement, that is in Hampshire. MARKWICK, a Sussex naturalist, places it later on the list of early songsters, giving it a range of from January 15th, to

April 4th. Certain it is, however, that when we hear the music of this bird poured forth loudly and continuously, we may hail it as an indication of coming Spring, and joyously exclaim with the author of "Minstrelsy of the Woods"—

"Hark how the air rings,
'Tis the Mavis sings:
And merrily, merrily, sounds her voice,
Calling on valleys and hills to rejoice;
For winter is past,
And the stormy blast
Is hastening away to the northward at last."

BURNS, it will be remembered, records the circumstance of hearing one of these birds sing in the month of January, in a Sonnet which thus commences—

"Sing on, sweet Thrush, upon the leafless bough;
Sing on, sweet bird, I listen to thy strain:
See, aged winter, 'mid his surly reign,
At thy blith carol clears his furrowed brow."

And when the season of blossoms and buds has become somewhat more advanced, the strain is again taken up by WILLIAM BROWNE, who singeth thus—

"———See the spring
Is the earth enamelling,
And the birds on every tree,
Greet the morn with melody,
Hark how yonder Throstle chants it,
And her mate as proudly vaunts it."

The nest of the Thrush is built generally in the stormy month of March, and some of its sweetest love-songs are borne afar upon, and drowned amid the shrill piping and whistling of, the gales of that boisterous season; then it is that other songsters of the grove begin to awake from their winter silence, and to prepare for that full burst of choral harmony, which awaits but

e arrival of the summer visitants, to swell, and swell, til it fills every thicket and glade with music, and kes it appear as if the whole universe were affected th some "melodious madness." In the following es by BLOOMFIELD, we are introduced to three of the tive musicians on whom devolves the performance of e prelude to this grand concert:—

> "The Blackbird strove with emulation sweet,
> And Echo answered from her lone retreat;
> The sporting Whitethroat on some twig's end borne,
> Poured hymns to freedom and the rising morn;
> Stopt in her song, perchance the starting Thrush,
> Shook a white shower from the blackthorn bush,
> Where dew-drops thick as early blossoms hung,
> And trembled as the minstrel sweetly sung."

In a thick bush, such as that of the hawthorn, holly, ver fir, furze, ivy; or sometimes in a dead fence, ere the grass grows high, does this bird construct, "huddle together" as BOLTON has it, a nest, the side of which is formed of small sticks, withered ves, grass, and various kinds of moss; clay and rotten od, with a few blades of withered grass to bind them ether, constituting the lining, which is near upon f-an-inch in thickness. RENNIE says that cow and se-dung are sometimes used, with the fibres of de- ed wood, to form a cement for this purpose. Here CLARE's description of the process of construction, l its natural results—

> "Within a thick and spreading hawthorn bush
> That overhung a molehill large and round,
> I heard, from morn to morn, a merry Thrush,
> Sing hymns to sunrise, while I drank the sound
> With joy:—and often, an intruding guest,
> I watch'd her secret toils, from day to day,
> How true she warp'd the moss to form her nest,
> And model'd it within with wood and clay.

And by and by, like heath-bells gilt with dew,
There lay her shining eggs as bright as flowers,
Ink-spotted-over shells of green and blue,
And there I witness'd, in the Summer hours,
A brood of Nature's minstrels chirp and fly,
Glad as the sunshine and the laughing sky.

To mark how well the poet and the naturalist agree, we have only to turn to BOLTON, who describes the eggs as of "a beautiful pale blue with a cast of green, and marked with a few distinct purple spots." MACGILLIVRAY says—"The eggs, generally five in number, are bright blueish-green, with scattered roundish spots of brownish-black; their length about an inch, their breadth nine twelfths." In his "History of British Birds," this author relates many interesting particulars of the Song Thrush, which he describes as "generally distributed in Britain and Ireland, occurring even in the bare northern isles, as well as in the wooded and cultivated parts." Here is an extract from his delightful work, which we are sure our readers will thank us for quoting, although it occupies a very considerable portion of our limited space:—

"The Song Thrush is associated in my memory with the Hebrides, where it is perhaps more abundant than in most parts of Britain. There, in the calm summer evening, such as for placid beauty far exceeds any that I have elsewhere seen, when the glorious sun is drawing towards the horizon, and shedding a broad glare of ruddy light over the smooth surface of the ocean; when the scattered sheep accompanied by their frolicksome lambkins, are quietly browsing on the hill; when the broad-winged eagle is seen skimming along the mountain ridge, as he wends his way towards his eyry on the far promontory; when no sound comes on the ear save at intervals the faint murmur of the waves rushing into the caverns and rising against the faces of the cliffs; when the western breeze, stealing over the flowery pastures, carries with it the perfume of the wild thyme

te clover; the song of the Thrush is poured forth from the
of some granite block, shaggy with grey lichens, and returns
· and sweeter modulations from the sides of the heathy
as. There may be wilder, louder, and more marvellous
id the mocking bird may be singing the requiem of the red
f the Ohio, or cheering the heart of the ruthless oppressor,
e man of many inventions; but to me it is all-sufficient, for
into the soul, melts the heart into tenderness, diffuses a
n, and connects the peace of earth with the transcendent
s of heaven. In other places the song of the Thrush may
and cheering; here, in the ocean-girt solitude, it is gentle
ing; by its magic influence it smoothes the ruffled surface
a of human feelings, as it floats over it at intervals with its
ells and cadences, like the perfumed wavelets of the summer

on the hill side lay thee down on this grassy bank,
e block of gneiss that in some convulsion of primeval times
hurled unbroken from the fissured crag above. On the
eath are small winding plots of corn, with intervals of
and tufts of the yellow iris. The coast is here formed of
crags, and jutting promontories, there stretches along in
g beach of white sand, on which the wavelets rush with
murmur. Flocks of Mergansers and dusky Cormorants are
the bay, the white Gannets are flying in strings towards
, the Rock-Doves glide past on whistling pinions, and the
tarlings bound towards their rocky homes. Hark to the
e Corn-Crake, softened by distance, now seeming to come
, now louder as if borne toward you by the breeze. It has
ut the Cuckoo calls to his mate from the cairn on the hill.
is silent. The streaks in the channel show that the tide
; a thin white vapour is spread over the distant islands;
nd them the spirit wings its flight over the broad surface
ean, to where the air and the waters blend on the western

But it is recalled by the clear loud notes of that speckled
that in the softened sunshine pours forth his wild melodies
addened ear. Listen, and think how should you describe
t so as to impress its characters on the mind of one who
rd it. Perhaps you might say that it consists of a suc-

cession of notes, greatly diversfied, repeated at short intervals with variations, and protracted for a long time; that it is loud, clear, and mellow, generally sprightly but at times tender and melting. You add that two birds at a distance from each other often respond, the one commencing its song when the other has ceased; and that several may be heard at once, filling a whole glen with their warblings. Listen again, and say what does it resemble.

'Dear, dear, dear,
Is the rocky glen;
Far away, far away, far away
The haunts of men.
Here shall we dwell in love
With the lark and the dove,
Cuckoo and corn rail;
Feast on the banded snail,
Worm and gilded fly;
Drink of the crystal rill
Winding adown the hill,
Never to dry.

With glee, with glee, with glee,
Cheer up, cheer up, cheer up; here
Nothing to harm us; then sing merrily,
Sing to the loved one whose nest is near
Qui, qui, qui, kweeu, quip,
Tiurru, tiurru, chipiwi,
Too-tee, too-tee, chiu, choo,
Chirri, chirri, chooee,
Quiu, qui, qui.'

This attempt to convey to the ear by means of written characters, the variations in the song of the bird, is, however, quite a failure, as all such efforts must be; and so the author evidently considers it, for he says in continuation, that—"The Thrush's song is inimitable and indiscribable;" and that it truly is so, all will testify who have listened to it with attention: as well attempt to paint a sunbeam, or to catch and hold a flying cloud-shadow, as to give phonotypic form and substance to the trills, and warbles, and exquisite mo-

dulations, and interminglings of musical sound, uttered by the feathered vocalists. It cannot be done, nor is it desirable that it should be attempted, any more than that birds should be taught to articulate the utterances of human speech, which, proceeding from their bills, must be devoid of sense or significance, being but—

> "Empty sounds and iterations,
> Very trying to one's patience."

So, at least, we have ever found and considered them. Therefore it is that we would not care to cultivate those imitative powers which the Thrush, in common with many other birds, is said to possess in a high degree. We are not only free to confess, with WORDSWORTH, our belief—

> "That every flower enjoys the air it breathes,"

but also that every *natural* note, of every bird that ever sung, has in it a meaning, which is well understood by the creatures of its kind, and by the Almighty Creator, who gave this power of expressing the various pleasing and other emotions which prompt their lays to their fellow warblers. Nor do we see any thing inconsistent with our conviction, that their state of existence is merely sensuous and temporary, in supposing that some of these musical utterances may be those of praise and thankfulness to that higher Providence, without whose knowledge, we are assured in scripture, not even a sparrow falls to the ground. Not merely without consciousness and premeditation is it, that—"All nature praiseth God." Thankless man might learn many a lesson from the beasts of the field, and the fowls of the air, would he but attend to their motions and utterances with a meek and understanding spirit; he

would then *know* that the song of the bird was something more than a combination of musical sounds; he would then confess with RICHARD HOWITT, that—

"High in the dawn the Lark will sing
O'er mountain and o'er river,
Wafting that *worship* on free wing
To the all-bounteous Giver.
The Thrush at eve, as sweet as loud,
Of joy like large partaker,
Will sing amid the singing crowd,
Yet louder *to his Maker*."

And feel with C. THOMPSON the devotional incitements which prompted such lines as these,—

"Sweet birds that breathe the spirit of song,
And surround Heaven's gate in melodious throng;
Who rise with the early beams of day,
Your morning tribute of thanks to pay;
You remind me that we should likewise raise,
The voice of devotion, and song of praise.
There's something about you that points on high,
Ye beautiful tenants of earth and sky."

The Thrush is a classical bird; HORACE declares it to be a very appropriate present to a legacy-hunter; and puts its praises into the mouth of a gormandizing spendthrift,—

"Cum sit abeso
Nil melius turdo."

And MARTIAL gives it the same rank among esculent birds, as he does the hare among quadrupeds,—

"Inter aves turdas, si quis me judice certat,
Inter quadrupedes gloria prima lepus."

Before concluding our chapter on the Thrush, it will be well to say a few words about the other individuals of the family to which it belongs; one of these, the Blackbird, or Garden Ouzel (*Turdus Merula*), we have

already described somewhat fully; and to another the Ring Ouzel, or White-breasted Thrush (*Turdus Torquatus*), have made an allusion sufficient for our present purpose. The following British Birds are included in the same genus by MACGILLIVRAY.—The Chestnut-backed, or Grey Thrush, or Fieldfare (*Turdus Pilaris*), a migratory bird, and no songster, chiefly valued on account of the excellent eating which its flesh affords; the Red-sided, or Wind Thrush, or Redwing (*Turdus Iliacus*), also migratory and gregarious like the last; the Variegated, or Mountain Thrush (*Turdus Varius*) a very rare bird in this country, about which but little is known; and the Missel Thrush, Shrite, or Storm-cock (*Turdus Viscivocus*), the largest, as well as the earliest, of our native songsters, and, next to the subject of this paper, the most interesting bird, perhaps of the genus. This bird is common in England, Scotland, and Ireland, where it permanently resides; the number of residents is however greatly increased by large flocks, which generally arrive in October, and depart in May. Its principal food is worms, larvæ, and seeds; it makes a loosely-constructed and bulky nest, which is placed, in thick bushes or in umbrageous trees, being plastered internally with mud, and lined with roots, grass, feathers, and moss; the eggs are four or five in number, flesh-colored, or purplish white, spotted with light brown, or pale purplish red. It has a loud and clear song, somewhat like that of the Blackbird, only less mellow and modulated. GILBERT WHITE has heard it sing as early as the 2nd of January; it usually selects a high tree as a place of vantage from whence to pour forth its bold, defiant strain,

and from its habit of singing frequently when the skies are overcast, and even amid the pauses of the hurtling tempest, has been called the Storm-cock. Many poems have been addressed to this bird, but none more appropriate and beautiful than that by CHARLOTTE SMITH, a portion of which we here quote: —

"The winter solstice scarce is past,
Loud is the wind, and hoarsely sound
The mill-streams in the swelling blast,
And cold and humid is the ground;
When to the ivy that embowers
Some pollard tree, or shelt'ring rock,
The troop of timid warblers flock,
And shuddering wait for milder hours.

While thou! the leader of their band,
Fearless salut'st the opening year;
Nor stay'st, till blow the breezes bland,
That bid the tender leaves appear!
But on one tow'ring elm or pine,
Waving elate thy dauntless wing,
That joy'st thy love-notes wild to sing,
Impatient of St. Valentine!

Go, herald of the spring! while yet
No harebell scents the woodland lane
Nor starwort fair, nor violet,
Braves the bleak gust and driving rain;
'Tis thine, as through the copses rude,
Some passive wanderer sighs along,
To soothe him with a cheerful song,
And tell of Hope and Fortitude!"

THE WOODLARK.

Hark, how the woodland echoes all reply.
Unto that sweetly modulated voice;
While in low bush, or grassy tuft hard by,
The Woodlark bids his brooding mate rejoice.

THE WOODLARK.

Alauda Arborea, *Linnæus, Temminck,* and *Macgillivray.* Alouette des Bois ou Cujelier, *Buffon.* Die Waldlerche, *Bechstein.*

"Dost thou love to hear the song birds of spring?
Are their notes as voices of joy to thee?
Then fly to the grove where the Woodlarks sing,
Rejoicing once more in their vernal glee.
The spring time is come, the winter is past,
And the Woodlarks' songs are cheerful once more:
Their sorrows are fled with the wintry blast,
And soft-flowing lays through the woodlands they pour
Forgetful how lately the winter winds blew,
And they sung the sad notes of their plaintive *lu-lu.*"

WILL our readers accept the invitation thus poetically given by the author of the "Minstrelsy of the Woods," and hasten with us "to the grove where the Woodlarks sing," now while the year is in its vernal prime, and while sunshine and showers weave a tissue of crystal and gold, that hangs like a transparent veil about the face of nature, freshening and glorifying it; while the flowers are awaking from their winter sleep, and shedding their perfume upon the gale, that plays with them a little rudely, perchance, but none the less lovingly; he is frolicsome and boisterous, from very wantonness of spirit; think of the many dark and dreary hours that have passed since he had the bright flowers for his companions, or the sparkling waters to wander over and refresh himself withal; since he had the leafy trees to nestle and whisper amid, and the sunshine to

gladden and warm him, so that in the absence of all things that could make him pleasant and cheerful, he grew a very misanthrope, taking delight in howling, and yelling, and making the most dismal noises around the habitations of men; in bursting open doors and windows, and rushing through key-holes and crevices, and sweeping round corners with savage fury, and taking all sorts of advantages of exposed and defenceless creatures. Think, we say, of the dreariness and desolation amid which he has dwelt for the last four months, and wonder not that he should be a little sharp and cutting at times, even yet, and a little rude and boisterous with his playmates, the delicate blossoms. And the birds, too, he loves them well, and often raises his voice, now clear and shrill, now low and murmuring, in unison with their varying strains, which he bears afar o'er hill and valley; and in the notes of none does he take a greater pleasure than in those of the gentle Woodlarks, that are now again filling the yet partially leafless grove with their "snatches of sweet song," and preparing for their parental cares and duties: —

"With kindred and clan they mingle the strain,
And love by the birds of their race to abide;
And they come to their forest haunts again,
To build their low nests by the green hill-side.
When the stormy winds unroof their retreat,
And wither the wreaths of their summer bowers,
Then afar in the valley the wanderers meet,
And seek to beguile the sad wintry hours;
While chilled by the night wind, and bathed by the dew,
They chant in soft concert, their plaintive *lu-lu*."

At the close of autumn, these Larks congregate in small flocks in the open fields, seeking for food; then

it is that their melodious warble is no longer heard, as they utter instead, a low melancholy cry, resembling the syllables, *lu lu*, hence CUVIER has applied to this bird the term *Alauda lulu*. Unlike the skylark, which loves the open fields, and rains down its flood of melody where no shadow intercepts the golden sunshine, the Woodlark delights to dwell amid the pleasant shelter of the umbrageous wood, and sing in the leafy solitude afar from man. Sometimes from the top, or amid the thick lower boughs of a tall tree, but oftener, perhaps, hovering on the wing above its nest, does it pour forth those strains, which for sweetness and richness, WOOD considers to be scarcely inferior to those of the Brake Nightingale, or Garden Fauvet, although for variety and execution, he confesses them to be surpassed by several other songsters. BECHSTEIN excepts only the Nightingale and Chaffinch, and pronounces this, of all Larks, the sweetest songster, and with these exceptions, of all birds the most delightful, which retain their natural song. This is high praise, but it appears to be borne out by the concurrent testimony of BOLTON, who tells us that some bird fanciers prefer it even to the Nightingale, with which it sometimes contends for superiority in song, invading even those hours which are generally considered sacred to the queen of feathered vocalists:

> "What time the timorous hare limps forth to feed,
> When the scared owl skims round the grassy mead;
> Then high in air, and poised upon his wings,
> Unseen, the soft enamored Woodlark sings."

The truth of this statement is confirmed by BLYTHE, who says that, "in hot summer nights, Woodlarks

soar to a prodigious height, and hang singing in the air." It has been a matter of dispute, whether the term Woodwele, or Woodwale, used by some old authors, refers to this bird, or to a species of Thrush. In the ballad of "Robin Hood," we hear it said, that—

> "The Woodwele sang and would not cease,
> Sitting upon the spray,
> So loud, he wakened Robin Hood,
> In the greenwood where he lay."

And again, in the rhyme of "True Thomas," the name occurs in a somewhat lengthened form,—

> "I heard the Jay and the Throstell,
> The Mavis mendyn her song:
> The Woodweleber yd as a bell,
> That the wood about me ronge."

"Yd as a bell," that is clear as a bell, may the sweet note of this gentle bird be well called; in some versions of old poetry, Woodweete is the name given to it; in the early editions of CHAUCER we believe this term occurs; and now we mention this earliest of English poets, and true lover of nature, we cannot refrain from quoting what he says about the love of freedom inherent in the feathered creatures,

> "——— which men feed in cages;
> For though they, day and night, tend them like pages,
> And strew the bird's room fair and soft as silk,
> And give them sugar, honey, bread, and milk;
> Yet right anon, let but the door be up,
> And with his feet he spurneth down the cup,
> And to the wood will be, and feed on worms."

Thus the original text is rendered by LEIGH HUNT, who adds in a note, these remarks:—

"The beautiful and true picture of the bird, 'spurning down his cup,' furnishes a charming variation of a simile which CHAUCER

is fond of. All the strength and springing quickness of a bird's legs, and all the tendencies of his nature, are in the word *spurning* thus applied; and the immediate object of the action is implied by the word *down*. We see the next moment he will be triumphantly up in the air. Thus write great poets."

To this we can but add the eloquent plea for liberty, which JAMES MONTGOMERY makes the very bird of which we are writing utter:—

"Thy notes are silenced and thy plumage mew'd;
Say, drooping minstrel, both shall be renew'd.
—Voice will return,—I cannot choose but sing;
Yet liberty alone can plume my wing;
Oh! give me that!—I will not, cannot fly,
Within a cage less ample than the sky;
Then shalt thou hear, as if an angel sung,
Unseen in air, heaven's music from my tongue:
Oh! give me that,—I cannot rest at ease
On meaner perches than the forest trees;
There, in thy walk, while evening shadows roll,
My song shall melt into thine inmost soul;
But, till thou let thy captive bird depart,
The sweetness of my strain shall wring thy heart."

Against the practice of caging birds, larks in particular, we would take every opportunity of uttering our indignant protest: and therefore do we once again venture to remind our readers of the utter inconsistency of a state of confinement with the natural habits and propensities of these free-winged creatures, which were meant to soar without let or hindrance, far up into the blue serene, and to sport and sing at large amid the green fields and the leafy woodlands. We never could understand how men could reconcile it to their consciences to circumscribe the happy flight of the beautiful and joyous songsters. Even if the selfish gratification of hearing them sing were the

only consideration, surely this must be greatly heightened by the natural adjuncts of rustling boughs, and perfume-laden breezes, and all the glories and beauties of creation, which surround them in their sylvan homes; there you have not one poor pining prisoner doing his best to beguile the dreary hours of captivity, but a whole concert, and not of birds only, but of other free creatures, which go to make up the happy round of existence, all enjoying life as God intended they should, and ministering to your pleasure at the same time. "Hark!" says the old dramatist, BEN JONSON,—

> "Hark! how each bough a several music yields;
> The lusty Throstle, early Nightingale,
> Accord in tune, though vary in their tale:
> The chirping Swallow, called forth by the sun,
> And crested Lark, doth her division run.
> The yellow Bees the air with music fill,
> The Finches carol and the Turtles bill."

The Woodlark, though not very numerous in any locality, is to be found in most of the wooded districts of England; it may also be met with in Wales, and, according to THOMPSON, in Ireland, being resident in the counties of Down and Antrim. It has been included by several naturalists among the birds of Scotland, although MACGILLIVRAY expresses a doubt as to whether it has been really met with in that country. In the northern countries of Europe, it appears as a summer visitant only, while in Germany, Holland, France, and Italy, it is, as with us, a permanent resident, being found, as BECHSTEIN says, principally in pine forests, in plains where there are fields and meadows in the vicinity, frequenting also

mountainous districts, and visiting alternately heaths and meadows. The food of the bird consists in summer of all kinds of insects; in autumn it feeds principally on seeds; and in the spring, when neither of these kinds of food are abundant, on green sprouts, water-cresses, and other tender plants, and sometimes on the catkins of the hazel. BRODERIP in his "Zoological Recreations," states, "that it is a very early songster, and in favorable weather, will begin its melody soon after Christmas." It also begins to breed early; COL. MONTAGUE records the circumstance of having found the nest of this bird, with eggs in it, on the fourth of April.

"Lo, the Place!—by a river whose stream runs along,
In a warble as soft as a Nightingale's song;
In whose deeps of clear crystal, the maculate trout,
Is seen swiftly darting or sporting about;
Here the hill's gentle slope to the river descends,
Which in sinuous course, through the wilderness wends;
There, amid lofty rocks, hung with ivy and yew,
Doth Echo the wood nymph, her pleasure pursue,
And the combe, and the glen, and the shadowy vale,
Invite the fond lover to tell his soft tale.
The woods and thick copses as mansions of rest,
Many warblers oft choose for their home and their nest.
A place where content in a cottage might dwell;
A place that a hermit might choose for his cell;
Where afar from all strife, and all tumult and pride,
The nymph, Tranquil Pleasure, delights to reside;
Where in meadow or grove, or the woodlands among,
The BIRDS may be heard in melodious song."

There, reader, is a picture of the home of the Woodlark, drawn by JENNINGS, in his "Ornithologia Poetica," wherein are enumerated the various members of the Lark family, or as we should more scientifically say, the genus *Alauda*, order *Passeres*, that is, accord-

ing to LINNÆUS, for some naturalists class them differently, as we have already stated in our chapter on the Skylark. At present it will be most convenient for us to take the Linnæan arrangement, although we shall not venture upon introducing all the *fifty* species comprehended in this large family group, the members of which are said to be distinguished "by a sharp-pointed slender bill; nostrils covered partly with feathers and bristles; tongue cloven at the end; toes divided to their origin; claw of the back toe very long, a little crooked; their motion running, not hopping." Besides the *Alauda Arvensis* and *Arborea* (Sky and Woodlark), then, we have to mention, as the most interesting birds of the genus—the Titlark (*A Pratensis*), which inhabits the greater part of Europe, and is well known in this country, being found principally in low grounds; it is about five inches and a half long, has a fine note, and sings sitting on trees, or on the ground, where it builds its nest; it has a black bill and yellowish legs; the prevailing tints of its plumage are a dusky brown, white, and dull yellow, with oblong black spots:—The Meadow-Lark, or old Field-Lark (*A Magna*), described by WILSON, as inhabiting North America, from Canada to New Orleans, and having a sweet song, though of limited compass; its plumage is very rich, the throat, breast, and belly being of a bright yellow; its back a bright bay and pale ochre, beautifully variegated with black; legs and feet pale flesh color, and very large, wanting the straight hind claw, which distinguishes the rest of the genus; its nest is composed of dry grass and fine bent wound all round, and leaving an arched entrance

level with the ground on which it is built, in or beneath a thick tuft of grass; the size of this bird, which feeds on insects and various kinds of seeds, is from ten and a half, to sixteen and a half inches; its flesh is much esteemed, being, it is said, little inferior to that of the quail. Then there is the Rock, Dusky, or Sea-Lark, which dwells on the shores of England and other rocky places, and has a note like the chirp of a grasshopper; it is a solitary bird, and sings little; size about seven inches long:—The Lesser or Short-heeled, Field, or Meadow-Lark, much like the Titlark, for which it is sometimes mistaken; a spring visitant in this country, about which little seems to be known:—The Lesser Crested-Lark (*A Nemorosa* or *Cristata*), an inhabitant of various parts of Europe, about which ornithologists differ greatly; it is said, like the Bullfinch, to possess great facility for acquiring tunes played or sung to it:—The Pipit-Lark (*A Trivialis*), a small bird, with olive brown and dusky ferruginous plumage:—The Red or Pennsylvania-Lark (*A Rubra*), a very rare bird in this country, in size somewhat larger than

"The crested herald of the morn."

with which we are all so familiar. And here we must finish our imperfect catalogue, the details of which being somewhat dry, we will enliven them with a song which JENNINGS gives as

"THE WOODLARK'S INVOCATION.

Goddess of the realm of Song!
Round whose throne the Warblers throng,
From thy bright cerulean sphere,
Deign our humble notes to hear!

Love demands our earliest lay;—
Love, the monarch of our May;—
Io pæans let us sing
While we welcome laughing spring.

May, with feet bedropp'd with dew,
On yon hill-top is in view;
May, whose arch look, winning wiles,
Youth on tip-toe oft beguiles.

Goddess of the soul of Song!
Thou to whom delights belong,
Deign to prompt the Warbler's Lay;
Deign to deck the coming day."

"Many birds," says GILBERT WHITE, "which become silent about Midsummer, resume their notes again in September; as the Thrush, Blackbird, Woodlark, &c.," and he asks, "are birds induced to sing again, because the temperament of Autumn resembles that of spring?" While KNAPP, who accounts for the comparative quietness of our summer months, by stating that "Those sweet sounds called the songs of birds, proceed only from the male; and with few exceptions only during the season of incubation;' goes on to pay a well-merited tribute of praise to the little Woodlark, which we quote:—

"The Redbreast, Blackbird, and Thrush, in mild winters, may continually be heard, and form exceptions to the general procedure of our British birds; and we have one little bird, the Woodlark (*Alauda Arborea*), that, in the early parts of the autumnal months, delights us with its harmony, and its carols may be heard in the air commonly during the calm sunny mornings of this season. They have a softness and quietness, perfectly in unison with the sober, almost melancholy, stillness of the hour. The Skylark also sings now, and its song is very sweet, full of harmony, cheerful as the blue sky and gladdening beam in which it circles and sports, and known and admired by all; but the voice of the Woodlark is

local—not so generally heard—from its softness, must almost be listened for, to be distinguished, and has not any pretensions to the hilarity of the former. This little bird sings likewise in the spring; but, at that season, the contending songsters of the grove, and the variety of sound proceeding from every thing that has utterance, confuse and almost render inaudible, the placid voice of the Woodlark. It delights to fix its residence near little groves and copses, or quiet pastures, and is a very unobtrusive bird, not uniting in companies, but associating in its own little family parties only, feeding in the woodlands on seeds and insects. Upon the approach of man, it crouches close to the ground, then suddenly darts away, as if for a distant flight, but settles again almost immediately. This lark will often continue its song, circle in the air, a scarcely visible speck, by the hour together; and the vast distance from which its voice reaches us in a calm day, is almost incredible. In the scale of comparison it stands immediately below the Nightingale in melody and plaintiveness; but compass of voice is given to the linnet, a bird of very inferior powers."

In a Table constructed by Mr. DAINES BARRINGTON to exhibit the comparative merits of the performance of our native Song Birds, in which No. 20 is supposed to be the point of absolute perfection, the qualities of the Woodlark's strain are thus numbered:—Mellowness of tone, 18; sprightly notes, 4; plaintive notes, 17; compass, 12; execution, 8. With the Skylark, the numbers are 4, 19, 4, 18, 18; and with the Titlark, 12 all through: thus placing these three members of the Alauda family very high in the scale of excellence. MUDIE has well observed that "the admirable manner in which the songs of birds are tuned to the characters of their general haunts, so that the song gives life to the scene, and the scene effect to the song, must equally strike and delight even the most casual observer"—then, after sketching out "the soft and

bowery vales," amid which the Nightingale is most commonly and most effectively heard, and "the open champaign," over which the Skylark pours his inspiring song, he proceeds thus:—

"Nor, though different, is it in worse keeping, if one takes the upland, tracking the line where the grass and heather meet, in order to catch the first light breeze of March upon the hill. The moss by the streaking runnel is in the brightest of its verdure, the daisy on the sward has just shaken off the snow, and caught a drop of kindlier dew, through which its golden eye, surrounded with pearl and tipt with crimson, smiles on the day. The Heath Cock has lain down to bask, the Plover and ever-stirring Lapwing are close, or have not arrived, and the Crow and the Raven are prowling in the coppice below, to clear whatever may have perished there during the storm. There are only a few tiny day-gnats dancing over the pools, which are reeking up to form those clouds that will refresh the earth with kindly showers. Thus there is loneliness—perfect solitude; but the air is fresh, the horizon is ample, the lungs play free, the steps lengthen, and one feels months added to the term of life. While in this mood, up springs the dappled brown Woodlark, warbling his prelude, till he gains the top of that single 'bird-sown' and scraggy tree, which winds from all points have bent and twisted, only to make its roots strike the deeper, and its wood become as iron, and then, wheeling upward, he redoubles his melody, till all the wild rings again, even when the songster is viewless in the sky:—and one becomes inspired with the free spirit of the hill."

The following remarks on the song of this bird are by the same author, and are too characteristic to be omitted here:—

"When the Woodlark is near trees, it varies its pitch and cadence probably more than the Skylark. It comes from the ground to the tree in a sort of waving course, singing very low, and giving but a portion of its brief stave. Then it perches and sings in an uniform key, but not full and round. After a little while, it wheels upward,

more wildly and rapidly than the Skylark, swelling its song as it ascends, and sometimes rises higher than the ordinary flight of the other, but not generally so high. When it takes the top of its flight, it sends down a volume of song which is inexpressibly sweet, though there is a feeling of desolation in it. The song, indeed, harmonises well with the situation; and to hear the Woodlark on a wild and lone hill-side, where there is nothing to give accompaniment, save the bleating of a flock and the tinkle of a sheep-bell, so distant as hardly to be audible, is certainly equal to the hearing even of those more mellow songs, which are poured forth in richer situations."

BURNS, as we have already shown, has borne testimony to the Woodlark's power of exciting tender and passionate emotions in the soul of the listener: here is another of his tributes to the bird, which expresses this yet more forcibly than what we have already quoted:—

"O stay, sweet warbling Woodlark stay,
Nor quit for me the trembling spray,
A hapless lover courts thy lay,
Thy soothing fond complaining.

Again, again that tender part,
That I may catch thy melting art;
For surely that wad touch the heart
Who kills me wi' disdaining.

Say was thy little mate unkind,
And heard thee as the careless wind?
Oh nocht but love and sorrow join'd
Sic notes of woe could wauken.

Thou tells o'never-ending care
O'speechless grief, and dark despair;
For pity's sake, sweet bird nae mair!
Or my poor heart is broken!"

MUDIE opines that the reason why Woodlarks are not so numerous in proportion to their eggs as the other species, is that they build in so inclement a season, and in barren exposed places; but this refers

more particularly to the bleak and stormy north. "In the high grounds on the skirts of the Grampians especially," he says, "the nests are liable to be destroyed by those storms of sleet and snow which set in sometimes as late as the middle of May, or even the beginning of June." MACGILLIVRAY, who seems to be in error, when he states that "it does not clearly appear that the bird has been met with in Scotland," describes the nest as placed on the ground among grass and corn, composed externally of dry grass, and lined with finer blades intermixed with hair: the eggs, four or five in number, are of a pale yellowish-brown, freckled with umber or greenish-brown; size, nine-twelfths of an inch long, seven-twelfths broad. NEVILLE WOOD observes that this nest very seldom occurs near houses, and is not met with, like that of the Tree Pipit, amongst long grass in woods, or in groves where the ground herbage is not luxuriant, but rises here and there into tufts and patches; in these,—in districts where the species is plentiful—you may confidently search for its grassy couch. HURDIS's lines on a Bird's Nest have been often quoted; nevertheless we must give them a place here:—

"But most of all it wins my admiration,
To view the structure of this little work,
A bird's nest. Mark it well, within, without;
No tool had he that wrought, no knife to cut,
No nail to fix, no bodkin to insert,
No glue to join: his little beak was all,
And yet how neatly finished. What nice hand,
With every implement and means of art,
And twenty years' apprenticeship to boot,
Could make me such another? Fondly then
We boast of excellence, whose noblest skill
Instinctive genius foils."

No more appropriate conclusion to this chapter
ı be found than those beautiful verses by WILLIAM
)WITT, wherein he embodies the fresh feelings and
ıociations of early days called up by the sight of—

"BIRDS' NESTS.

Spring is abroad! the Cuckoo's note
  Floats o'er the flowery lea;
  Yet nothing of the mighty sea
Her welcome tones import:
Nothing of lands where she has been,
  Of fortunes she has known;
The joy of this remember'd scene,
  Breathes in her song alone.
No traveller she, whose vaunting boast
Tells of each fair but far off coast:
She talks not here of Eastern skies,
But of home and its pleasant memories.

Spring is abroad! a thousand more
  Sweet voices are around,
  Which yesterday a farewell sound
Gave to some Foreign shore;
I know not where—it matters not;
  To-day their thoughts are bent,
To pitch in some sequester'd spot,
  Their secret summer tent;
Hid from the glance of urchins' eyes,
Peering already for the prize;
While daily, hourly intervene
The clustering leaves, a closer screen.

In bank, in bush, in hollow hole,
  High on the rocking tree,
  On the gray cliffs that haughtily
The ocean waves control;
Far in the solitary fen,
  On heath, and mountain hoar,
Beyond the foot or fear of men,
  Or by the cottage door;
In grassy tuft, in ivy'd tower,
Where'er directs the instinctive power,
Or loves each jocund pair to dwell,
Is built the cone or feathery cell.

Beautiful things! than I, no boy
  Your traces may discern,
  Sparkling beneath the forest fern,
With livelier sense of joy:
I would not bear them from the nest,
  To leave fond hearts regretting;
But, like the soul screened in the breast,
  Like gems in beauteous setting,
Amidst Spring's leafy, green array
I deem them; and, from day to day,
Passing, I pause, to turn aside,
With joy, the boughs where they abide.

The mysteries of life's early day
  Lay thick as summer dew,
  Like it, they glitter'd and they flew,
With ardent youth away:
But not a charm of yours has faded,
  Ye are full of marvel still.
Now jewels cold, and now pervaded
  With heavenly fire, ye thrill
And kindle into life, and bear
Beauty and music through the air:
The embryos of a shell to-day;
To-morrow, and—away! away!

Methinks, even as I gaze, there springs
  Life from each tinted cone;
  And wandering thought has onward flown
With speed-careering wings,
To lands, to summer lands afar,
  To the mangrove, and the palm;
To the region of each stranger star
  Led by a blissful charm:
Like toys in beauty here they lay—
They are gone o'er the sounding ocean's spray;
They are gone to bowers and skies more fair,
And have left us to our march of care."

THE WREN.

A pert and lively bird the Jenny Wren.
Her house she buildeth with a concave dome.
And by the trodden ways and haunts of men.
Full often sings her song, and makes her home.

THE WREN.

Motacilla Troglodytes, *Linnæus.* Sylvia Troglodytes, *Temminck.* Anorthura Troglodytes, *Macgillivray.* Roitelet, *Buffon.* Der Zaunkönig, *Bechstein.*

"Why is the Cuckoo's melody preferred,
And Nightingale's rich song so fondly praised
In poets' rhymes? Is there no other bird
Of Nature's minstrelsy that oft hath raised
One's heart to ecstacy and mirth so well?
I judge not how another's taste is caught;
With mine are other birds that bear the bell,
Whose song hath crowds of happy memories brought;
Such the wood Robin singing in the dell,
And little Wren that many a time hath sought
Shelter from showers in huts where I may dwell,
In early Spring, the tenant of the plain
Tending my sheep, and still they come to tell
The happy stories of the past again."

IT is thus that the Peasant Poet of Northamptonshire, JOHN CLARE, writes of the little Jenny Wren, a familiar and favorite songster in almost every part of Europe, being more abundant even in the bleak north, than in the sunny south; inhabiting the pine forests of Sweden and Norway, and singing its cheerful strains to the wild winds that sweep around the stormy Hebrides and Faroe Isles, and to the waves that tumultuously dash upon the inhospitable shores of Iceland and Greenland; sporting amid the myrtle groves of Spain and Italy; and feeding upon the ripe figs of Smyrna and Trebizond:—the little Jenny Wren, that we all know and love, almost—may we not say quite?—as well as we do

"The household bird with the red stomacher."

GEORGE DARLEY, in his Dramatic Chronicle of Athelstan, makes Edgitha say—

> "The Wren's voice,
> Though weak, preserveth lightsome tone and tenor,
> Ne'er sick with joy like the still hiccuping swallow,
> Ne'er like the Nightingale's, with grief."

And here we have a distinct impression of the uniformly cheerful, though never very hilarious, song of the Wren, which BECHSTEIN describes as "pleasing and varied, and for the size of the bird, of great power, consisting of loud notes gradually falling." MICHAEL DRAYTON, when he wishes to make up an agreeable company of feathered choristers, says—

> "And by that warbling bird, the Woodlark, place we then,
> The Reed-sparrow, the Nope, the Redbreast, and the Wren."

And a very delightful concert no doubt such would be: the Nope, it should be mentioned, is an old local name for the Bullfinch.

Perhaps the reason why the song of this little bird has been especially admired and commended, is that it may be heard when all, or nearly all, other feathered songsters are silent. GILBERT WHITE observes that, "Wrens sing all the winter through, frost excepted;" and BLYTHE adds, "in frosty weather also, when the sun shines." While GRAHAME says,—

> "Beside the Redbreast's note, one other strain,
> One summer strain, in wintry days is heard.
> Amid the leafless thorn the merry Wren,
> When icicles hang dripping from the rock,
> Pipes her perennial lay; even when the flakes
> Broad as her pinions fall, she lightly flies
> Athwart the shower, and sings upon the wing."

To this we may very appropriately add the fine moral lines in reference to this bird, introduced by BISHOP

MANT into his description of the month of November: —

"The quick note of the russet Wren,
Familiar to the haunts of men,
He quits in hollow'd wall his bow'r,
And thro' the winter's gloomy hour
Sings cheerily: nor yet hath lost
His blitheness, chill'd by pinching frost;
Nor yet is forc'd for warmth to cleave
To cavern'd nook, or strawbuilt eave.
Sing, little bird! Sing on, design'd
A lesson for our anxious kind;
That we, like thee, with heart's content
Enjoy the blessings God hath sent;
His bounty trust, perform his will,
Nor antedate uncertain ill!"

To the same effect is likewise the testimony of WOOD, who says of this bird, that—

"The song is short in stave, shrill, and remarkably loud in proportion to the size of the bird. It may perhaps be ranked amongst the most trivial of our feathered choristers, but the notes are more prized than they would otherwise be, on account of their being frequently heard in mid-winter, when a mere scream would almost seem sweet, especially if it proceeded from the throat of so tiny a bird as the Ivy Wren. And thus, insignificant and humble (with regard to musical merit) as are its strains, I always listen to them with delight in the dreary seasons, though we are apt to overlook them altogether in fairer times. In fact, interesting as are some of the habits of this species, it always conveys to one's mind the idea of cold and of winter faggots, even in the midst of summer. It often commences singing so early as January, mostly taking its stand on a heap of sticks, a log of wood, a hedge abounding with dead under-wood, or a currant bush. Were it not that the bird is generally so conspicuous, it would be difficult to believe that the notes proceed from a creature of such small dimensions, so loud and clear are they."

We may also quote WATERTON who, in his usual happy manner, gives, in a few words, a sketch of our little brisk favorite's characteristics: —

"The Wren is at once distinguished in appearance from our smaller British songsters by the erect position of its tail. Its restlessness, too, renders it particularly conspicuous; for, when we look at it, we find it so perpetually on the move, that I cannot recollect to have observed this diminutive rover at rest on a branch for three minutes in continuation. Its habits are solitary to the fullest extent of the word; and it seems to bear hard weather better than either the Hedge-sparrow or the Robin; for whilst these two birds approach our habitations in quest of food and shelter, with their plumage raised as indicative of cold, the Wren may be seen in ordinary pursuit, amid icicles which hang from the bare roots of shrubs and trees, on the banks of the neighbouring rivulets; and amongst these roots, it is particularly fond of building its oval nest. The ancients called the Wren, Troglodytes; but it is now honoured with the high-sounding name of Anorthura; alleging for a reason, that the ancients were quite mistaken in their supposition that this bird was an inhabitant of caves, as it is never to be seen within them. Methinks that the ancients were quite right,—and that our modern masters in ornithology are quite wrong. If we only for a moment reflect, that the nest of the Wren is spherical, and is of itself, as it were, a little cave, we can easily imagine that the ancients, on seeing the bird going in and out of this artificial cave, considered the word Troglodytes an appropriate appellation."

This little bird, we may add in continuation, which—

> "When icicles hang dripping from the rock,
> Pipes her perennial lay,"

begins to build very early in the spring, fixing its nest sometimes under the thatch of a building, sometimes on the side of a moss-covered tree, or under an impending bank; "the materials of the nest," as MONTAGUE remarks, "being generally adapted to the place; if built against the side of a hay-rick, it is composed of twigs; if against the side of a tree, covered with white moss, it is made of that material; and with green moss, if against a tree covered with the same.

Thus instinct directs it for security." JESSE, in his "Gleanings," mentions that "he has a Wren's nest in his possession built amongst some litter thrown into a yard. It so nearly resembled the surrounding objects, that it was only discovered by the bird's flying out of it." Some of the straws of which this nest was composed, were so thick, that it was a wonder how so small a bird could have used them. And is it not wonderful, altogether, the intuitive skill of these tiny architects, that become so perfect in their art, without any previous training or preparation? It would seem, too, that in the construction of this abode of love, the labor is properly apportioned, one bird not interfering with that department of the duty which the other has, as it were by agreement, undertaken to perform, for a correspondent of the "Magazine of Natural History" relates, that in watching a pair of Wrens building their nest in an old road, he observed that one confined itself to the construction of the nest, and the other to the collection of materials, which it regularly delivered to the master builder, and never attempted to put into their proper places. And well constructed is the shapely little structure, little to us, but large in proportion to the birds which are to tenant it; lined within with feathers, or some other soft substance. We may address the parent bird in the words of an anonymous poet quoted by WOOD:—

"Within thy warm and mossy cell,
Where scarce 'twould seem thyself could dwell,
Twice eight, a speckled brood we tell,
Nestling beneath thy wing!
And still unwearied, many a day,
Thy little partner loves to stay,
Perched on some trembling timber spray,
Beside his mate to sing."

From among many other anecdotes illustrative of the sagacity, if we may so call it, of this bird, we meet with the following by KNAPP, whose concluding remarks are worthy of serious thought and attention.

"June 14.—I was much pleased this day by detecting the stratagems of a common Wren to conceal its nest from observation. It had formed a hollow space in the thatch, on the inside of my cow-shed, in which it had placed its nest by the side of a rafter, and finished it with its usual neatness; but lest the orifice of its cell should engage attention, it had negligently hung a ragged piece of moss on the straw-work, concealing the entrance, and apparently proceeding from the rafter; and so perfect was the deception, that I should not have noticed it, though tolerably observant of such things, had not the bird betrayed her secret, and darted out. Now from what operative cause did this stratagem proceed? Habit it was not;—it seemed like an after-thought;—danger was perceived, and the contrivance which a contemplative being would have provided, was resorted to. The limits of instinct we cannot define: it appeared the reflection of reason. This procedure may be judged perhaps, a trifling event to notice; but the ways and motives of creatures are so little understood, that any evidence which may assist our research should not be rejected. Call their actions as we may, they have the effect of reason; and loving all the manners and operations of these directed beings, I have noted this, simple as it may be."

The Wren builds twice a year, in April and June, and its brood is a large one, ranging from ten to eighteen; the eggs are of a roundish form, white and spotted, near the larger end, with a slight sprinkling of small faint red spots; that is, according to BOLTON: by MACGILLIVRAY they are described as in shape an elongated oval; in size, eight twelfths of an inch long, by six twelfths broad; in color, pure white, with scattered dots of light red. This author also describes

the nest as enormously large, roundish or oblong, composed chiefly of moss, and lined with feathers. RENNIE observes that the Wren does not begin at the bottom of its nest first, as is usual with most birds; but if against a tree, first traces the outline of the nest, which is of an oval shape, and by that means fastens it equally strong to all parts; and afterwards encloses the sides and top, near which it leaves a small hole for an entrance: if the nest is placed under a bank, the top is first begun, and well secured in some cavity, by which the fabric is suspended. We will now quote GRAHAME'S poetical description of this curious piece of bird architecture: —

"The little woodland dwarf, the tiny Wren,
That from the root-sprigs trills her ditty clear.
Of stature most diminutive herself,
Not so her wondrous house; for, strange to tell!
Her's is the largest structure that is formed
By tuneful bill and breast. 'Neath some old root,
From which the sloping soil, by wintry rains,
Has been all worn away, she fixes up
Her curious dwelling, close and vaulted o'er,
And in the side a little gateway porch,
In which (for I have seen) she'll sit and pipe
A merry stave of her shrill roundelay.
Nor always does a single gate suffice
For exit, and for entrance to her dome;
For when (as sometimes haps) within a bush,
She builds the artful fabric, then each side
Has its own portico. But, mark within!
How skilfully the finest plumes and downs
Are softly warped; how closely all around
The outer layers of moss! each circumstance
Most artfully contrived to favour warmth!
Here read the reason of the vaulted roof;
Here Providence compensates, ever kind,
The enormous disproportion that subsists
Between the mother and the numerous brood,
Which her small bulk must quicken into life.
Fifteen white spherules, small as moorland hare-bell,

And prettily bespecked like fox-glove flower,
Complete her number. Twice five days she sits,
Fed by her partner, never flitting off,
Save when the morning sun is high, to drink
A dewdrop from the nearest flowret cup.
But now behold the greatest of this train
Of miracles, stupendously minute;
The numerous progeny, claimant for food,
Supplied by two small bills, and feeble wings
Of narrow range; supplied, aye, duly fed,
Fed in the dark, and yet not one forgot!"

The latter of these lines are but a poetical paraphrase of an observation of an English naturalist, we think it was WILLOUGHBY, who said, "It is strange to admiration, that so small a bodied bird should feed such a company of young, and not miss one bird, and that in the dark also." RAY ranks this circumstance among "those daily miracles of which we take no notice." These observations are censured by Mr. BOLTON, who says, that "any one who thinks about it, and compares the dimensions of the window with those of the house within, will instantly perceive that a Wren's nest, is more strongly lighted than any palace in the kingdom." But this naturalist, in his haste to find fault with others, has quite overlooked the circumstance, that the parent bird, while feeding her numerous family, stands in the entrance of her dwelling, and must therefore in a great measure exclude the light. All this, however, is mere quibbling, from which we gladly turn to quote WORDSWORTH'S exquisitely beautiful lines on

"A WREN'S NEST.

Among the dwellings framed by birds,
In field or forest with nice care,
Is none that with the little Wren's
In snugness may compare.

No door the tenement requires,
And seldom needs a laboured roof;
Yet is it to the fiercest sun
Impervious and storm-proof.

So warm, so beautiful withal,
In perfect fitness for its aim,
That to the Kind by special grace
Their instinct surely came.

And when for their abodes they seek
An opportune recess,
The Hermit has no finer eye
For shadowy quietness.

These find, 'mid ivied Abbey walls,
A canopy in some still nook;
Others are pent-housed by a brae
That overhangs a brook.

There to the brooding Bird her Mate
Warbles by fits his low clear song;
And by the busy Streamlet both
Are sung to all day long.

Or in sequestered lanes they build,
Where, till the flitting Bird's return,
Her eggs within the nest repose,
Like relics in an urn.

But still, where general choice is good,
There is a better and a best;
And, among fairest objects, some
Are fairer than the rest;

This, one of those small builders proved
In a green covert, where, from out
The forehead of a pollard oak,
The leafy antlers sprout;

For She who planned the mossy Lodge,
Mistrusting her evasive skill,
Had to a primrose looked for aid
Her wishes to fulfil.

High on the trunk's projecting brow,
And fixed an infant's span above
The budding flowers, peeped forth the nest
The prettiest of the grove!

The treasure proudly did I show
To some whose minds without disdain
Can turn to little things, but once
Looked up for it in vain:

'Tis gone—a ruthless Spoiler's prey,
Who heeds not beauty, love, or song,
'Tis gone! (so seemed it) and we grieved
Indignant at the wrong.

Just three days after, passing by
In clearer light the moss-built cell
I saw, espied its shaded mouth,
And felt that all was well.

The Primrose for a veil had spread
The largest of her upright leaves;
And thus, for purposes benign,
A simple Flower deceives.

Concealed from friends who might disturb
Thy quiet with no ill intent,
Secure from evil eyes and hands
On barbarous plunder bent.

Rest, mother-bird! and when thy young
Take flight, and thou art free to roam,
When withered is the guardian flower,
And empty thy late home,

Think how ye prospered, thou and thine,
Amid the unviolated grove,
Housed near the growing primrose tuft,
In foresight, or in love."

We scarcely think that sufficient attention has been called to the services rendered by this diminutive songster to man, in a way to which special allusion is made in the following paragraph from "Times Telescope," where it appears without any author's name attached:—

"As a devourer of pernicious insects, one of the most useful birds is the house Wren. This little bird seems peculiarly fond of the society of man, and it must be confessed that it is often protected by his interested care. It has long been a custom, in many parts

the country, to fix a small box at the end of a long pole, in gar-ns, about houses, &c. as a place for it to build in. In these boxes ıey build and hatch their young. When the young are hatched ıe parent birds feed them with a variety of different insects, par-cularly such as are injurious in gardens. An intelligent gentle-ıan was at the trouble to observe the number of times a pair of ıese birds came from their box, and returned with insects for their ɔung. He found that they did this from forty to sixty times in an ɔur; and, in one particular hour, the birds carried food to their ɔung seventy-one times. In this business they were engaged the ɛater part of the day; say twelve hours. Taking the medium, ıerefore, of fifty times in an hour, it appeared that a single pair of ıese birds took from the cabbage, salad, beans, peas, and other ɡetables in the garden, at least, six hundred insects in the ɯrse of one day. This calculation proceeds upon the supposition, at the two birds took only a single insect each time. But it is ghly probable they often took several at a time."

The Common Wren, we are informed by BRODERIP, too often shot by sportsmen for the sake of his tail ɜathers, which when skillfully manipulated, admirably ɔpresent a spider, which forms a good bait for trout. The bird may be followed," he says, "up and down ıe hedge row, till it will suffer itself to be taken by ıe hand. Then borrow—steal if you will—two or ıree of the precious feathers — but let the little ɜarbler go to enjoy its liberty, and furnish 'Wrens' ıils' for another year." We should, however, pro-ɛst not merely against depriving the poor little bird ſ its life or liberty, but of those tail feathers which ɛe so ornamental and peculiarly distinctive; and that, ɔo, for the purpose of inflicting suffering upon other ſ God's creatures. No, let the brisk little Kitty Vren, as she is sometimes called, go free and un-ɜathed, and pirk up her tail, unshorn of its natural ad *proper dimensions*. Like WHARTON, who sings,—

"Fast by my couch, congenial guest,
The Wren has wove her mossy nest,
From busy scenes and brighter skies,
To lurk with innocence she flies."—

We love so well to watch the lively motions, and to listen to the sprightly strains of this bird, that we would not have it molested, much less injured, for worlds. Let it sing on and build its domed retreat, and feed and rear its tender fledglings: if we question of its happiness amid domestic cares and duties, how will it answer? According to JAMES MONTGOMERY, thus,—

"Wren canst thou squeeze into a hole so small?
—Aye, with nine nestlings too, and room for all;
Go, compass sea and land in search of bliss,
Then tell me if you find a happier home than this."

By and by we shall see the queer little objects which now open their bills to such an amazing extent, to receive the insect food which their parents so unremittingly bring them, essay their tiny wings—

"As little Wrens but newly fledge,
First by their nests hop up and down the hedge;
Then one from bough to bough gets up a tree,
His fellow, noting his agility,
Thinks he as well may venture as the other,
So flustering from one spray to another,
Gets to the top, and then, emboldened, flies
Unto an height past ken of human eyes."

As quaint old WILLIAM BROWNE describes it. But we have tarried too long amid the sylvan haunts of the bird, and must now proceed to another part of our subject; before doing this, however, we would fain place before our readers a sweet little cabinet picture drawn by DOUGLAS ALLPORT:—

"Hard by those pales with lichens dyed,
That bound the Spinney's southern side,

O'er which a sapless elder throws
Its rusty stem and random boughs,
A clear cold streamlet brawls along,
And there the mossy stems restrain,
Its puny force, and strive in vain,
To still its ceaseless song;
But babbling yet it winds its way,
Hid from the piercing eye of day,
By woods that o'er its margin bending,
A holy calm and quiet lending,
Wanton in every breeze, and throw
Their shadows in the flood below;
And there an aged whitethorn grows
Bow'd down by time, and bare, and grey,
And hark! to break the still repose,
The piping Wren, from spray to spray
On restless wing for ever springing,
Twitters throughout the livelong day,
Amidst the scanty foliage winging—
Scared by the traveller's tread,—its way."

The Wren has a short and feeble flight, it is therefore easily hunted down, and in Ireland there is a cruel practice prevalent, of chasing the poor little bird from hedge to hedge, and beating it to death with sticks. This barbarous custom appears to be very ancient, its origin being lost in the regions of fable. Mr. THOMPSON, writing on the Birds of Ireland, introduces a note to this effect—"To hunt the Wren on Christmas-day is a favorite pastime of the peasantry of Kerry. This they do, each using two sticks, one to beat the bushes, the other to fling at the bird. It was the boast of an old man who lately died at the age of one hundred, that he had hunted the Wren for the last eighty years on a Christmas-day. On St. Stephen's day the children exhibit the slaughtered birds in an ivy bush, decked with ribbons of various colors, singing the well-known song, and thus collect money."

In Hall's "Ireland," we have a full account given of this silly custom, with the following version of the "Wren-boy's song" as it is called, a composition not at all remarkable for poetic merit:—

"The Wran, the Wran, the king of all birds,
St. Stephen's day was cot in the furze,
Although he is little, his family's grate,
Put your hand in your pocket, and give us a thrate.
Sing holly, sing ivy,—sing ivy, sing holly,
A drop just to drink it will drown melancholy.
And if you dhraw it ov the best
I hope in heaven your soul will rest;
And if you dhraw it ov the small,
It won't agree with de Wren-boys at all."

According to one tradition, it is said, that in the "ould ancient times," when the Irish were about to catch their Danish enemies asleep, a Wren flew upon a drum, and by the sound of it awoke the slumbering sentinels, just in time to give the alarm, and save the whole army, in consequence of which the little bird was proclaimed a traitor, and his life declared forfeited, wherever he was henceforward found. As to the origin of the imperial dignity conferred upon him in the opening line of the chant,—

"The Wran the Wran, the king of all birds,"

it may very reasonably be attributed to this legend:—Once upon a time, in a grand assembly of all the birds of the air, it was determined that the sovereignty of the feathered tribes should be conferred upon the one who could fly highest. None questioned that the Eagle would be the successful competitor, and this majestic bird at once commenced his sunward flight, in the full confidence of victory: when he had left the other winged aspirants for the kingship far below, and

attained an altitude which they could not hope to reach, he proclaimed triumphantly his monarchy over the feathered creation: short-lived, however, was his triumph; for the little Wren who had hidden his tiny form under the feathers of the Eagle's crest, stepped from his hiding place, and flying up a few inches higher, chirp'd as loudly as he could—

"Birds look up and behold your king,
Great of soul, though a tiny thing."

MACGILLIVRAY places the Common Brown, or European Wren, as it is sometimes called, in a genus by itself, which he distinguishes by the euphoneous title *Anorthura*, this is not quite such a crooked name as *Troglodytes*, by which most naturalists distinguish the species, after the ancient designation of a people who lived in caves.

Of the Wood-Wrens, another genus called *Phyllopneuste*, there are four kinds known to us, viz., the Yellow Wood-Wren (*P. Sylvicola*), called by the Scotch, Willie Muftis; the Willow Wood-Wren (*P. Trochilus*), sometimes called the Willow-Warbler, Ground-Wren, Hay-Bird, or Huckmuck; the Short-winged Wood-Wren, or Chiff-chaff (*P. Hippolais*), also called the Chip-chap and Least Willow-Wren. Then we have the genus *Regulus*, including the Fire-crowned Kinglet (*R. Ignicapillus*), and the Gold-crowned Kinglet (*R. Auricapillus*), sometimes called the Marigold Finch, but most commonly known as the Golden-crested Wren, the smallest of British song birds, some of whose habits and peculiarities we have endeavoured to describe in the following lines: —

'Mid the shadow of the pines, flitting here and there,
Lo! the Golden-crested Wren glanceth through the air,
Like a fiery meteor, or a shooting star,
The tiniest of creatures that in the forests are.

Never still a moment—whisking to and fro—
Now amid the topmost boughs, now the roots below;
Now he perks his feathers up, now he twinks his eye,
Now emits a warble low, now a short sharp cry.

Lo! the Golden-crested Wren, he's a happy bird,
Dwelling 'mid the solitude, where the boughs are stirred
By the gentle breezes, stealing in and out,
He their tuneful whispers understands, no doubt.

Soft and solemn music he hath ever near,
Like angelic voicings from a better sphere;
Kind and tender greetings from his wedded love,
And the gentle cooings of the Cushat dove.

Hath he not the Magpie, and the laughing Jay,
And the playful Squirrel—all to make him gay?
Pleasant sights and perfumes—hath he not all these,
And bright gleams of sunshine, breaking through the trees?

As the tufted pine cones sporteth he among,
Cometh not the Wild-Bee murmuring a song,
Where around his dwelling, tassels all of gold,
Make it like a palace gorgeous to behold?

When the tempest riseth, and the winds roar loud,
And the haughty pine trees unto earth are bowed,
Lo! secure he lyeth in his feathered nest,
Fearing nought of danger,—perfectly at rest.

Yes, he leads a pleasant life—doth the Crested Wren,
Far away from noisy towns and the haunts of men;
If no duties bound me—were I free to roam—
Gladly would I visit him, in his sylvan home.

THE BLACKCAP.

When April showers are freshning all the woods,
Then first is heard the Blackcap's dulcet strain;
When Autumn gales are sweeping o'er the floods,
She leaves us for a milder clime again.

THE BLACKCAP.

Motacilla Atricapilla, *Linnæus.* Sylvia Atricapilla, *Temminck* and *Macgillivray.* Fauvette à tête Noir, *Buffon.* Die Schwarzköpfige Grasmücke, *Bechstein.*

> "Fain, 'mid the hawthorn's budding boughs
> Or where the dark green ivy shows
> Its purple fruit the foliage through,
> Would I the early Blackcap view;
> With sable cowl, and amice grey,
> Arrived from regions far away;
> Like palmer from some sainted shrine,
> Or holy hills of Palestine:
> And hear his desultory bill
> Such notes of varying cadence trill,
> That mimic art, that quavered strain,
> May strive to match, but strive in vain."
>
> *Bishop Mant.*

WE commenced our first chapter with the Nightingale, the universally acknowledged Queen of Song; at the head of our last we place a bird, which is sometimes said to dispute her claim to pre-eminence, and is therefore called the Mock Nightingale. This is a migratory species, as our readers will have learned from the above lines: it arrives in our island about the middle of April, and immediately commences a survey and inspection of places fitted for nidification, making choice of the most retired and solitary spots for this purpose. KNAPP observes that, "so careful and suspicious is it, that several selected spots are often abandoned, before the nest is finished, from some apprehension or caprice: all intrusion is jealously

noticed, and during the whole period of sitting and rearing its young, it is timid and restless." The same author has observed, that "both birds will occasionally perform the office of incubation," during which period only, is the melody—which he reckons third in the scale of music, for execution, compass, and mellowness —of the male heard; these visitants wasting no time in amusements, but appearing in great haste to accomplish the object of their visit, and depart; which they generally do somewhat early in September. Our account of the Blackcap, or, as the Germans call him, the Monk or Moor, from his sable hood, will be but short, as we wish to include in this chapter several other of the British Songsters, to which we do not consider it necessary to appropriate a separate article, although they are of sufficient importance to call for some slight notice. According to MACGILLIVRAY, this sweet warbler becomes on its arrival generally distributed over England, and may sometimes be found in the south of Scotland, but its love of privacy and retirement render it little known; its nest is loosely constructed, lined with fibrous roots and hair, and placed in the fork of a shrub, or on the ground. The eggs are four or five in number, eight and a half-twelfths of an inch long, seven-twelfths broad; in color greyish-white, faintly mottled and freckled with purplish-grey, with some streaks of blackish-brown. BOLTON says that, "they are of a pale reddish-brown, mottled with a deeper color, and sprinkled with a few dark spots:" while BECHSTEIN describes them as "yellowish-white, and sprinkled with brown spots." This latter author also says that the nest is firm, hemispherical, and well

built; and this agrees with a beautiful illustration of the structure, given in "Harmonia Ruralis," where it is said that in Italy the bird builds twice a year, but in England only once; and that "its food is chiefly insects, but in defect of these, it will eat the fruit of the spurge-laurel, service, and ivy, and that it appears to be even fond of the last, frequenting much trees overgrown with it." NEVILLE WOOD gives rather a sad account of the bird as a garden and orchard depredator, and says that the best time to observe it, is when the currants and raspberries are ripe, as it is then so intent on its pilfering, as to admit of a much nearer approach than at any other period of its sojourn with us. He thus continues—

"The song of the Blackcapt Fauvet is, perhaps, not surpassed by any other of the family, with the exception, however, of those of the Brake Nightingale and Garden Fauvet. It is loud, rich, clear, and rapid, and, in its way, almost equals that of the leader of the vernal chorus, the Brake Nightingale. It sings more constantly than any of its congeners, and indeed it is much more frequently heard than seen. If, however, you will sit upon a mossy bank, shaded with bushes and trees, near the spot from which the song proceeds, it will not be long before you obtain a sight of him, as, when undisturbed, he generally sings in rather a conspicuous station, at the top of a tree. But if you approach incautiously, or hastily, it instantly darts down into the midst of the thickest brake the spot affords, where it will patiently wait your departure. In the mean while, however, for the sake of employment, it will renew its strains even though you be standing within a few yards of it."

MAIN, writing on British Song Birds in the "Magazine of Natural History," says of this species, that—

"It is the *contra-alto* singer of the woodland choir. The fine, varied, joyous song of this emigrant is noticed by the most listless

auditor: the strain occupies about three bars of triple time in the performance, and though very frequently repeated, is somewhat varied in every repetition. He begins with two or three short essays of double notes, gradually *crescendo* up to a loud and full swell of varied expression. One passage often occurs, as truly enunciated as if performed on an octave flute. The style and key of the song are nearly the same in all individuals, though some may be noticed to vary in style. I knew one bird that frequented the same spot of a wood for three summers, who signalized himself by an arrangement of notes, very much excelling his brethren around. The Blackcap is certainly the finest singer of the whole tribe of warblers, except the Nightingale."

MISS WARING, in her "Minstrelsy of the Woods," says that this bird is of a most amiable and affectionate temper, and that when taken captive with his family, he will continue to feed the young ones and the female, even forcing the latter to eat, when the misery she experiences from the loss of freedom would lead her to refuse all sustenance. In time he becomes much attached to the person who takes care of him, expressing his affection by particular notes of joy on the approach of such to his cage. Like the Nightingale, on the approach of the season of emigration, he becomes restless, frequently fluttering his wings against the bars of his prison, and is sometimes so agitated during the autumnal nights, as to die in consequence. We must quote this lady's sweet lines to the bird:

"Oh! fair befal thee, gay Fauvette,
With trilling song and crown of jet;
Thy pleasant notes with joy I hail,
Floating on the vernal gale.
Far hast thou flown on downy wing,
To be our guest in early spring:
In that first dawning of the year,
Pouring a strain as rich and clear
As is the Blackbird's mellow lay,
In later hours of flowery May.

While April skies to grove and field,
Alternate shade and sunshine yield,
I hear thy wild and joyous strain,
And give thee welcome once again.
Come build within my hawthorn bower,
And shade thy nurslings with its flower;
Or where my wreathed woodbines twine,
Make there a home for thee and thine.
Now fair befal thee, gay Fauvette,
With trilling song and crown of jet!"

By BUFFON, and some other naturalists, this bird has been called a Fauvet: WOOD describes four species of Fauvets as British Song Birds, and a very melodious family group they form: these are—1st, the Blackcap Fauvet, (already described); 2nd, the Garden Fauvet, (*Sylvia Hortensis*), sometimes called the Garden Warbler, Pettychaps, or Nettle-creeper; 3rd, the White-throated Fauvet, (*S. Cinerea*), distinguished by a great many names, such as the Greater Whitethroat, Whey-beard, Wheetie-why, Churr, Muff, Beardie, Whattie, &c., &c.; and 4th, the Garrulous Fauvet, (*S. Garrula*), known as the Lesser Whitethroat, Babillard, and White-breasted, or Babbling Warbler. Of these, the third on the list, the Whitethroat as it is commonly called, is by far the best known, although the Garden Fauvet is more admired for its powers of song, being considered by many judges inferior only to the Nightingale and Blackcap. Wood speaks of its melody as delightfully sweet and mellow, excelling in these particulars even that of its sable-hooded congener; it is most commonly known as the Greater Pettychaps, and is the true *Beccafico* of the Italians: like the rest of the group, it is migratory, arriving in April and departing in September; it is described as a very active

and lively bird, ever in motion, and flitting about with peculiar gracefulness.

"Come ye, come ye, to the green, green wood,
Loudly the Blackbird is singing;
The Squirrel is feasting on blossom and bud,
And the curled fern is springing.
Here you may sleep, in the wood so deep,
When the moon is so warm and so weary,
And sweetly awake, when the sun through the brake
Bids the Fauvet and Whitethroat sing cheery."

It is thus that WILLIAM HOWITT invites us forth into the woods to listen to the Whitethroat, whose song, says BECHSTEIN, "consists of numerous agreeable strains given in rapid succession, to hear which distinctly it is necessary to be near the bird, which rises a little way in the air when it sings, turning round at the conclusion in a small circle, and then perches again upon the bush." Mr. SWEET, in his "British Warblers," a work of well deserved reputation, gives a pleasing description of the Whitethroat in a state of confinement; it is, he says:—

"One of the most delightful and pleasing birds that can be imagined. If kept in a large cage with other birds, it is so full of antics in flying and frisking about, and erecting its crest, generally singing all the time, that nothing can be more amusing. It is quite as hardy as the Blackcap, and if a good one be procured, it is little inferior in song; but in this they vary considerably, the wild ones as well as those in a cage. I have now in my possession one that I have had about eleven years, in as good health, and singing as well as ever, and certainly no song need be louder, sweeter, or more varied. * * * It will, indeed, sing for hours together, against a Nightingale, now in the beginning of January, and will not allow itself to be outdone; when the Nightingale raises its voice, it does the same, and tries its utmost to get above it; sometimes in the midst of its song it will run up to the Nightingale, and stretch out

its neck as if in defiance, and whistle as loud as it can, staring it in the face; if the Nightingale attempts to peck it away, it is in an instant flying round the aviary, and singing all the time. While singing, the throat of this bird is greatly distended, and the feathers on the top of its head raised up."

We will now let JOHN CLARE, in his own simple and natural way, describe

"THE PETTYCHAP'S NEST.

Well! in my many walks I've rarely found
A place less likely for a bird to form
Its nest—close by the rut-gulled waggon road,
And on the almost bare foot-trodden ground,
With scarce a clump of grass to keep it warm!
Where not a thistle spreads its spears abroad,
Or prickly bush, to shield it from harm's way;
And yet so snugly made, that none may spy
It out, save peradventure. You and I
Had surely passed it in our walk to-day,
Had chance not led us by it!—Nay, e'en now,
Had not the old bird heard us trampling by,
And fluttered out, we had not seen it lie,
Brown as the road-way side. Small bits of hay
Plucked from the old propt haystack's bleachy brow,
And withered leaves, make up its outward wall,
Which from the gnarl'd oak-dotterel yearly fall,
And in the old hedge-bottom rot away.
Built like an oven, through a little hole,
Scarcely admitting e'en two fingers in,
Hard to discern, the birds snug entrance win.
'Tis lined with feathers warm as silken stole,
Softer than seats of down for painless ease,
And full of eggs scarce bigger even than peas!
Here's one most delicate, with spots as small
As dust, and of a faint and pinky red.
—Stop! here's the bird—that woodman at the gap
Frightened him from the hedge:—'tis olive-green.
Well! I declare it is the Pettychap!
Not bigger than the wren, and seldom seen.
I've often found her nest in chance's way,
When I in pathless woods did idly roam;
But never did I dream until to-day
A spot like this would be her chosen home."

With these lines we must conclude our short account of this interesting branch of the Warbler family, in which family MACGILLIVRAY includes the Wrens and Kinglets, already described; the Chirper genus, of which but one species, the Grasshopper Chirper, or Warbler, Cricket-bird, or Brake-hopper, (*Sylvia Locustella*), is known to us, and that not at all familiarly; the Reedlings, Sedge, and Marsh (*S. Salicaria* and *S. Arundinacea*), sometimes called Sedge or Marsh Warblers, or Wrens; and the Furzeling Genus, represented in this country by the Provence Furzeling, (*S. Provincialis*), best known as the Furze Wren, or Dartford Warbler, which is a permanent resident in several of our south and south-eastern counties, generally inhabiting commons where furze thickets abound, among which it glides with great activity, flying with short jerks, and feeding principally on small insects which it catches on the wing, and returns to its perch to swallow.

In most of the works purporting to treat exclusively of British Song Birds, there are included several other species, which either permanently reside in, or which are regular periodical visitants of, these islands; few, however, in addition to those already described, or named, possess many claims to particular notice; and of these few a very brief mention may suffice. For the sake of convenience we will take up the table of contents to that beautiful work, BOLTON'S "Harmonia Ruralis," in which we find three representatives of the *Emberizine*, or Bunting family, viz., the Common or Corn Bunting, (*E. Miliaria*), and the Yellow Bunting, (*E. Citrinella*), better known as the Yellow Hammer, sometimes called the Devil's Bird, on account of an

absurd popular superstition, which we need not repeat, rendering it obnoxious to the hatred and persecution of the ignorant. GRAHAME thus alludes to the song, if so it may be called, and the nest, of this pretty and sprightly bird:—

"I even love the YELLOW-HAMMER'S song.
When earliest buds begin to bulge, his note,
Simple, reiterated oft, is heard
On leafless brier, or half-grown hedge-row tree;
Nor does he cease his note till autumn's leaves
Fall fluttering round his golden head so bright.
Fair plumaged bird! cursed by the causeless hate
Of every schoolboy, still by me thy lot
Was pitied! never did I tear thy nest:
I loved thee, pretty bird! for 'twas thy nest
Which first, unhelped by older eyes, I found.
The very spot I think I now behold!
Forth from my low-roofed home I wandered blythe,
Down to thy side, sweet CART, where 'cross the stream
A range of stones, below a shallow ford,
Stood in the place of the now spanning arch;
Up from that ford a little bank there was,
With alder-copse and willow overgrown,
Now worn away by mining winter floods;
There, at a bramble root, sunk in the grass,
The hidden prize, of withered field-straws formed,
Well lined with many a coil of hair and moss,
And in it laid five red-veined spheres, I found:
The Scyracusan's voice did not exclaim
The grand *Eureka*, with more rapturous joy,
Than at that moment fluttered round my heart."

The other individual of this genus, described by BOLTON, is the Reed Bunting, *(E. Schœniclus)*, sometimes called the Black-headed Bunting, the Reed or Water Sparrow, and often confounded with the Reed Warbler, or as MACGILLIVRAY calls it, the Marsh Reedling, (*Motacilla Arundinacea*,) of which a representation is also given in the work above named, as is that of the Sedge Warbler, or Willow Lark, (M. Sali-

caria), and the Grasshopper Warbler, or Grasshopper Lark, (*Sylvia Locustella*), whose name, MUDIE says, is quite a misnomer, "as it does not *warble*, nor, as far as observation has gone, utter any sound save a hissing chirp, something similar to that of the Grasshopper, or the Mole Cricket." This author also disputes the correctness of its classification with aquatic birds, amongst which some authors place it, although he admits that it may sometimes be heard in thick bushes near the water. Let us, before we quit the neighborhood of the gliding streams and

> "Shallow rivers, to whose falls
> Melodious birds sing madrigals,"

devote a few lines to one of the above-named haunters of such pleasant spots of nature's quietude,

Where rushes hide the stagnant pool, or fringe the gliding stream,
And in the sunshine dragon-flies, like winged jewels, gleam;
Where on the borders of the marsh, the stunted hawthorns grow,
And thrift, and wild sea-lavender, shed o'er a purple glow;
Where alders tremulously stand, and osier twigs are seen
To dance unto the singing breeze, like fairies clad in green;
Where drooping willows kiss the wave, and whistling reeds in ranks,
Incline their velvet heads unto the shores, and shelving banks;
Where dives the sullen water-rat; where leaps the speckled frog;
And flies and midges gaily sport above the quaking bog;—
'Tis there the blythe Sedge Warbler dwells, and there his nest he builds,
In rushy tuft, or whatsoe'er the needful shelter yields,
'Tis there he singeth constantly, a sweet, though scarce-heard song,
When skies are beautifully blue, and summer days are long,
And sometimes in the misty morn, and sometimes in the night,
He chanteth out right merrily, to show his heart is light:
He glanceth 'twixt the bending reeds, he skimmeth o'er the tide,
And many a snug retreat is there, his form from foes to hide;
Come weal, come woe, his constant mate still sitteth on her nest,
And food is plentiful, that he may pick and chose the best;
And for his rising family he hath no anxious cares,
Like men, who know the world is full of pitfalls and of snares;
With fears, that truly prophecy, his heart is never stirred,
He is unconscious of all these—oh, happy, happy bird!

We had almost forgotten to mention another Song Bird, figured by BOLTON, whose home and haunts are by the brooks and streamlets; that is the Grey and Yellow Wagtail, (*Motacilla Boarula,*) a much rarer bird with us, than is another of the genus, called the Pied Wagtail, the *M. Yarrelli* of MACGILLIVRAY, *M. Alba* of LINNÆUS, generally known as the Water Wagtail or Dish-washer.

In MACGILLIVRAY'S arrangement of British Birds, the Robin, as we have observed, forms a genus by itself, under the head *Erithacus*; in the family to which it belongs, *Saxicolinæ*, is included the Alpine and Hedge Chanters, (*Accentor* or *Motacilla Alpinus,*) and (*A.* or *M. Modularis*); the former a very rare bird with us, sometimes called the Collared Starling; and the latter a very familiar one, known under the several names of the Hedge Sparrow, Hedge Warbler, Hedge Dunnock, and Shufflewing, the last name being expressive of a characteristic habit of the bird, which at all seasons has a peculiar shake of the wings, increasing during the breeding period, to a perfect flutter. Like the Redbreast, the Chanter may occasionally be heard, even in the winter season; its song is short and clear, and pleasantly modulated, but neither rich nor powerful. Then there is the Common House Sparrow (*Passer Domestica*) celebrated by the Latin poet CATULLUS, about which much might be said; and those lively, but very shy birds, the Chats, of which BOLTON gives the figures of two, viz., the Whin, or Furze Chat (*Motacilla Rubetra*), and the Fallow, or Stone Chat (*M. Ænanthe)* sometimes called the Whitetail, Fallowsmitch, or Wheatear, the latter name being derived, as BLYTH

supposes, from its peculiar cry—*wheat jar!* In the same family are also included the Redstarts, Redtails, or Firetails, of which BOLTON describes but one species, although there are three known as British Birds, that is the White-fronted Redstart of MACGILLIVRAY, the *Motacilla Phœnicurus* of LINNÆUS, a migratory bird, very partial to old walls, in the chinks of which it frequently builds a nest of fibrous roots and moss, plentifully lined with hair, wherein it deposits six or seven eggs of a light greenish-blue, much like those of the Hedge Sparrow, so well known to truant boys. GILBERT WHITE says of this bird, that—"sitting very placidly on the top of a tall tree in a village, the cock sings from morning to night—he affects neighbourhoods, and avoids solitudes, and loves to build in orchards, and about houses;" so that we see, he also is one of the familiar friends of man:—

The lively Redstart strains his little throat,
  Perch'd on an orchard tree throughout the day;
When downy seeds upon the breezes float,
  And withered leaves begin to strew the way;
  And although bright the sunny beams that play
Upon the landscape, yet all things denote
  The glory of the year hath pass'd away:
And there he warbles out his farewell note;
Soon will his desultory song be heard
  In climes more bright and balmier than ours;
The cold, ungenial north suits not this bird,
  And so he journeys to a land, where bowers
Are ever green; to visit us again
When the sweet smile of April lights the plain.

Conclusion.

WE have thus brought our pleasant task to a completion—pleasant, and as we hope not unprofitable, either to ourselves or our readers, whom, it may be, we shall at a future time invite to take another ramble with us amid the beauties and wonders of creation; to them, for their company and encouragement; to the Naturalists whom we have quoted; and especially to the Poets on whom we have drawn so largely for illustrative matter, we would here express our warm acknowledgments. Should any among them be pining under a sense of neglect in this iron age of utilitarianism, we would remind them of the words of CONRAD OF WURSBURGH, a minstrel of the 17th century, who, speaking of the apathy of the world towards poetry, said—

"I care not for their gifts! My tongue shall not be silent, since the art itself will reward me. I will continue to sing my song like the Nightingale, who sings for her own sake; hidden in the woods her notes assuage her cares, nor does she heed whether any stranger listen to her strains."

As a fitting addenda to these remarks, we may, perhaps, be allowed to quote some lines which we find among our papers, on—

The Golden-crested Warbler.

[This is an elegant little bird, bearing some slight resemblance to the Golden-crested Wren of Britain; it is, however, considerably larger, the tail is more forked, and the prevailing tint of the plumage is green, instead of being brown, as is the case with that tiniest of songsters. This Warbler is a native of Denmark, and *appears* to be ill adapted to the cold northern regions which it inhabits; but as "God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb," and as nothing, into which he has put the breath of life, is without its peculiar enjoyments, so we doubt not that this *seemingly* fragile and delicate creature is gifted with powers which enable it to withstand the tempests of the north, and that it passes its days as pleasantly as those which dwell beneath sunnier skies, and in a warmer atmosphere. We are but too apt to be led by appearances, without sufficiently reflecting on their deceptive nature, and the thought immediately struck us, on viewing a drawing of this beautiful bird, and reading that it was a *Warbler*, and a native of so bleak and ungenial a country as Denmark, that it resembled the Poet, placed in a situation where few can appreciate his value, or care to listen to the melody of his lyre.]

Where the stormy Baltic dashes
On the rocks of Elsinore,
And the coast of Zealand lashes
With a loud, continuous roar,
There,—amid the pines and spruces,
Which impregnate all around
With their terebinthine juices,
Flowing forth from many a wound,
Dwells the Warbler, golden-crested,
Green and glossy are his plumes,
Many a fierce wind hath he breasted,
Many an hour of tempest-glooms.

'Tis a dark and stormy region,
For a bird so fair and small;
Blasts are there—an angry legion,
And as on they sweep, down fall
Stately pines of growth gigantic,
Flinging their black arms about;
Billows leap as they were frantic,
Caverns echo to their shout;

Rock to rock is wildly calling,
Roch to rock again replies;
There is crash and boom appalling,
And the sea-fowl's piercing cries.

Who can hear that sweet bird singing,
Who can listen to its lay,
When such sounds as these are ringing—
Ever ringing—night and day!
Can the fisher on the billow?
Can the fowler on the rock?
Can the sailor, he whose pillow
Is amid the tempest shock?
He who sees the walrus welter,
And the porpoises at play,
Seeking neither rest nor shelter—
Lovers of the storm are they!

Tell me, then, can no one hear him—
That sweet bird of dulcet song:
May no mortal wight come near him,
All the dreary winter long?
Yes! for now and then a maiden,
Stealing from the town or farm;
Or a youth, with breast love-laden,
Owns the music hath a charm;
So do tearful sires and mothers,
Widows sad, and men forlorn,
Sisters lone and grieving brothers—
All, who sorrow's yoke have borne!

All, in whom the chords of feeling
Have been woken by the touch
Of some angel-power, revealing
Grief, or pleasure, overmuch;
All, who are by aspirations,
Glorious and lofty, swayed;
All, whose thoughts are like oblations
On a heavenly altar laid;
These, and such as these, will hearken
To the sweetly-warbled song,
Though the clouds around may darken,
And the winds be loud and strong.

Like that bird so sings the poet
In the dreary waste of life;
Sweet he sings, but who shall know it?
All around is storm and strife!

Jarring interests, and contending,
Passions wage eternal war;
Angry conflicts, never ending,
All his strains accordant mar:
Who shall know it? *who* shall listen
To the chanted notes of love?
Many an one whose eye shall glisten,
Thinking of the realms above?

Though the multitude may never
Come to listen to thy strain;
Though to him who toileth ever,
All thy singing be in vain;
Though the merchant's gains and losses
Fill his heart and close his ears!
Though ambitious pride engrosses
Noble statesmen, high-born peers;
POET! ne'ertheless continue
To uplift thy voice in song,
Use the power that is within you,
To subdue it were a wrong!

Use the *gift*, and thank the *Giver*,—
Blending notes of love and praise;
Let thy song flow like a river,
Fertilizing arid ways;
Flowers shall spring where least expected,
Cheering thougts in many a heart,
Pining, lonely and neglected,
Stricken by affliction's dart;
Hope, and Peace, and Gladness giving,
Such shall be thy blessed lot,
Cherished by the few while living,
And when dead, still unforgot!

INDEX OF QUOTATIONS.

RICHARD TAYLOR, PRINTER, WATTS' PLACE, CHATHAM.